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# CATHOLICISM

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## INTRODUCTION

IN the following pages the name Catholicism is used to denote that form of the Christian religion which has its headship at Rome. If the reader feels tempted to ask with what right I have limited the meaning of the name to what is sometimes known as Roman Catholicism, I may answer shortly that it is impossible to enter into the question whether other Christian bodies have the right to use the title. By prescription the Roman Church has that right, and common usage has distinguished two main divisions in Christianity since the Reformation—namely, the Protestant and the Catholic. Before the Reformation, certainly from the fourth century, the word “Catholic” was used as synonymous with the Christian or true Church. Thus we find St. Augustine writing that: “Although heretics wish to be styled Catholic, yet if anyone asks where is the Catholic place of worship, none of them would venture to point out his own conventicle.” Traces, however, of the original meaning of the word persisted in the creeds, in the passage, for instance, which speaks of “the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church.” When, in the sixteenth century, the unity of Christendom was severed, the reformers came to be known as Protestants—while the name Catholic remained attached to those in communion with the Pope. This, then, is the defence, if any be needed, of the restriction of the title to one Church. I do not think, however, that anything else could have been attempted in a short account such as this.

# CATHOLICISM

## CHAPTER I

### *CATHOLICISM AS A RELIGION*

No name is better known than Catholicism, none, perhaps, less understood. And the reasons for this are many. One, as Mr. Chesterton suggested in *The Everlasting Man*, is that few ever regard it with fresh, unprejudiced minds. It is too familiar; and, besides, the dust and smoke of controversy still hang around, for it has ever been the lot of Catholicism to excite hatred or passionate love, to be a kind of spiritual Helen, saluted now as the object of the world's desire, now as the harlot of the new Troy of the Seven Hills. In England especially, past prejudices and suspicion endure, and even if the spirit of a *Westward Ho* has passed away, and gibes at tiaras and Inquisitions are now rare, nevertheless, a belief persists that in some way or another Catholicism is bound up with superstition and opposed to science and modern progress.

Prejudice can only be dissipated fully by a patient and long drawn out study of the facts, a study impossible in these few pages. Indeed, the task of explaining Catholicism is not easy. Despite an underlying simplicity, there is such a vast edifice of belief closely interconnected that, quite apart from the difficulty of meeting prejudice, an exhaustive account is out of the question. There exist, of course, numberless works on a larger scale, apologetic and explanatory, and there are such classics as the *Discours sur*

*l'Histoire Universelle* of Bossuet, de Maistre's *du Pape*, and the writings of Cardinal Newman; while for anyone who will keep his eyes open, there is much to be learnt from the arts and from the stories and windows of old churches. The almost fabulous magnificence of a Chartres is dedicated entirely to Catholic dogmas and events; artists, like Michelangelo and Raphael, have expressed their faith on a Sistine ceiling or a Vatican loggia, while Dante, like his beloved Beatrice, plays the guide amid the circles of Catholic theology and revelation.

In a short study such as this, something far less ambitious must be essayed, and the most feasible plan appears to be to start at one central idea and work outwards. With this method the reader will be able to perceive something of that self-consistency which Catholicism claims, and to appreciate its attitude historically both in the past and in the present. Such an appreciation is almost necessary, if any true judgment is to be formed on the main issues of life. Catholicism in the past has played a considerable part in the civilisation of Europe, as Mr. Belloc has reminded us in his *Europe and the Faith*, so much so, indeed, that ignorance of the Catholic factor would render our conclusions as erroneous as those of a foreign tourist in the lands of the British Empire who was ill-informed about, or ignorant of, the existence of that Empire. Moreover, not only is the past saturated with Catholic theory and principles, but the best work was done when belief was strongest. Men felt that there was something worth loving, an ideal to live for and to die for. Now, if we are to believe the psycho-analysts, bad instincts can be sublimated only by belief in an ideal accepted as true, and their greatest handicap at the present day is that, unfortunately, neither they nor their patients have any such conviction. And this suggests a reason for a new and unprejudiced study of Catholicism in the light of present needs. For a long

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time the civilised world has tried every kind of expedient and ideal; we have had, in turn, Liberalism, Progress, Science, Marxism, the Absolute, Eugenics, and Supermen, but none of them has proved to be that golden rod of legend which measures all things. The craving now expresses itself particularly in the searching for an order in society, in art, and in philosophy. It is the same instinct, so a modern art critic has suggested, which drives "the housewife to arrange bibelots symmetrically on the parlour shelf," that sends Prof. Whitehead searching for a pattern in nature and the artist for architectural and architec-tonic forms. Until recently the Catholic order received little attention in England, despite its imposing lines and curves and the cosmic sweep of its principles, religious, philosophic, and social. Abroad, statesmen, like Mussolini, have been quicker to see the value of Catholic theory and order for the regeneration of natural life, and though Daudet,\* of the *Action Française*, has overreached himself in his identification of Catholicism with a particular régime, his error is one of exaggeration and not neglect. Even in England certain sections of the community are moving towards a more Catholic conception, as witness the Anglo-Catholic activities, the economists' interest in medieval social conceptions, and the revival of Thomist philosophy in non-Catholic groups of reformers. With the memory of the war like a writing on the wall, and books announcing the Decline of

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\* Maurras seems from his writings to have gone further. Identifying Christianity with what is Asiatic, he regards Catholicism as the heir of ancient Rome, and therefore anti-Christian. It is amusing to compare with this *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism*, by Fülöp-Miller, in which Bolshevik principles are likened to those of Jesuits, whose motto is "Order!"

the West, anxious minds will scan any news which promises to be good.

The key of the Catholic system is the doctrine of the supernatural,\* and as it is most easily and most often misunderstood, it may well serve as a starting-point. First of all, it has nothing to do with the superstitious or magical, and it is not even to be identified with the miraculous. The doctor or scientist sees a woman saying her rosary or blessing herself with holy water, or hears of an ulcer being cured at Lourdes. He is inclined to lump them altogether as superstition, and the miracle is for him nothing but an effect of unknown forces of Nature. The Catholic will agree that some so-called miracles may be explicable by science; he is equally ready to submit them to every possible test, but where he parts company is on a principle. He refuses to believe a miracle is impossible, and when there is evidence for an event which cannot be called natural without destroying the foundations of all natural science, he accepts the evidence and assigns a cause above nature.

The Catholic, therefore, tests any so-called miraculous occurrence by evidence, and he believes the miraculous to be possible because he believes in the existence of God. That God exists is a presupposition of all religion, but Catholicism claims that His existence can be demonstrated by reason. Christian theology "maintains the doctrine of the existence of a personal God as a truth, but holds that our belief in it is based

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\* To help the reader I may add that it is as unwise to criticise Catholicism without some knowledge of the meaning of the word "supernatural" as it would be to judge modern mathematical-physics without some knowledge of non-Euclidean geometries and space-time. That is why I spend the following pages giving a rudimentary conception of it.

## CATHOLICISM AS A RELIGION II

upon inference." "The ages of faith are the ages of rationalism."<sup>\*</sup> A Catholic would prefer the word "reason" to "rationalism" since this latter has evil associations, but it is certainly true that he appeals steadily to the logic of argument for his beliefs. Now, if God exists, certain other propositions can easily be deduced, though they are, strange to say, often greeted with incredulity even by theists. The fact is that many so-called theists are half infidels. They wave their hand to a supreme being, and are shocked when they are told that this God is really alive, and not a dead corpse of a deity "or asleep like Endymion." Catholics, on the other hand, quite logically infer that God cannot be idle in His own universe, that His will is certainly a providence and not a blind fate, and that it is at least possible that He may have made His wishes known by revelation and altered the course of nature and human events. The question then arises, is it likely that God should have so acted? Those who answer in the negative—and they are many—base their view explicitly or implicitly on the assumption that man does not require outside help. He can find all he wants with his own resources—that is, happiness, truth, and goodness are within his reach. They must admit, without a doubt, that the belief has never yet come true, that the majority of men have had to confess themselves mediocrities or part-failures, and that an earthly paradise is still far off. But against this they would, I suppose, urge that the past has its lesson for the future, that both knowledge and the control of resources have increased, and that mankind is moving toward its destiny, and will win success finally. Much might be said about this argument from progress; for instance, that there is little evidence from

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\* *Religion in the Making*, by Prof. Whitehead, p. 62 and p. 86.

it, and that, as someone has coarsely said, it regards human lives and souls as dung to fertilise a future crop. But putting aside these and other criticisms and conjectures, we can apply a simple and, perhaps, decisive test of the view by an appeal direct to human nature. Is there any sign of a radical change in the spirit of man? Or is it not true that he carries with him in his very soul as long as he is man the seeds of his own undoing, that he is plagued with bad as well as good dreams, with a sense of incompleteness, which all his achievements serve but to authenticate and increase? Like Ulysses, he may set sail after long journeying for a better world, but he will never reach his dreamland, though he wanders for eternity. Fiona Macleod wrote once of joy and sorrow moving ever together hand in hand like brother and sister. If, then, the suggested diagnosis of human nature be true, men and women, quite apart from the pre-occupations of a busy life which make them turn to authority for the best part of their beliefs, are drawn mothlike by the light of truth, but are dazzled by it and carried by the urge of an insatiable longing beyond all self-imposed bounds to their desire. Expectation and disappointment, high hope and melancholy are the appointed metre, the beat and counter-beat of man's nature on earth, and human embodiments of truth and beauty have their seasons of growth and decay. Though the artist and philosopher always think that their fashion is a final and unalterable vision in the quest of truth, the mind strains upward into a colder and colder atmosphere of abstractions, and then planes down to the companionable earth and to delight in the senses and their evidence alone. Art has a similar history, and literature, like a Greek chorus, keeps up a long-sustained refrain, telling men in one strophe that there is "never any mark of man so stark, but vastness blurs and time beats level," and in the antistrophe that—

" All the firsts are hauntings of some Last,  
And all the springs are flashlights of one spring."

Man, then, peers out of the pages of history and literature as a being with one constant and paradoxical characteristic. He is forever chasing himself to catch his own shadow; he swings between a worship of himself as a god and a longing for liberation from such a fetish, between a naturalism which degenerates rapidly into vice and a kind of mystic or dionysiac cult of escape. "Matter and spirit, heaven and earth mingled, animality with an overflow of sublime life, sin grafted on an irrepressible love of good, death enclosed in his lower vitality, and immortality inscribed high up on the pediment of his temple: such is man." And for this reason he is divided within himself and sits astride of two worlds, which, like wild horses, tear him asunder.

Well, then, if this be true, says the Catholic, and if God be existent and alive, to expect help from Him is not irrational, and even superstition shows itself as only the perversion of a sound instinct. Natural religion springs from this need of man, together with the recognition of God's claims and authority, but the response for help will be from God's side, and, as we might surmise, it will be a revelation and a gift. This once granted he then presses on to show more closely what the nature of this help will be. He urges that it will certainly satisfy human needs, and that probably it will be a gift transcending, though including, all desires and godlike in its generosity. Those human needs are expressed as already stated, in a desire for happiness, truth, and goodness. But there is a curious trait in the expression of these desires if we consult the purest record of them in legend and fairy-tale and mystic fancy. They all follow the same lines, the fairy prince and a trial, a sleeping beauty hedged round with thorn-bushes, divine Eros disguised, and trysting

with Psyche in the dark. It would seem as if mankind were haunted with the hope of a divine advent, and had guessed that this divine gift would call for self-sacrifice, and the trial of obedience and courage and fidelity against danger. The anticipation or hope is, and must indeed be, vague, because no man can reckon what God will choose to do, but there remains the probability that God may give Himself in some way or another, and devise a means whereby human nature may be raised above itself into a union with the divine.

When, then, Truth came, and, as the Catholic Church sings at the Nativity, the Almighty Word glided down in the midnight silence, the dreams passed into reality and were fulfilled beyond expectation. The divine love graced human nature, and the divine love was mingled with it. A new covenant was struck, and God satisfied the desire for happiness and truth by promising Himself as the reward for obedience to His revelation. The exact nature of this revelation will be explained later. What concerns us now is its twofold character, as a response and a divine response. It is natural, in the sense that it satisfies the reason, makes clear man's destiny, and promises happiness. But it is also supernatural because God engages Himself to transform man into a higher creature—to give him a participation of the divine life which He Himself enjoys. Here, then, is the Catholic meaning of the word "supernatural." It is a form of life higher than that which we possess by being born of human stock. There is obviously in Nature a certain hierarchy of forms, the animate is above the inanimate, the animal above the plant, human nature above the animal; high above all is the divine. Evolutionists tell us that the lower form may develop into a higher,—for our purposes, it is enough to say that if a monkey were to be transformed into a man, it would have to cease to be that specific kind of animal and assume a new

form of life. Now God, though He is infinitely removed from man, has willed to change man into a resemblance of Himself, and He is enabled to do this without a complete alteration of man by reason of one attribute which man already shares with God, and that is mind. The mind is the faculty of truth, and there is nothing higher than truth;\* therefore, if the finite range of man's mind were extended infinitely and a new power added so as to make it capable of contemplating the world of truth in which God dwells, it would combine in one a divine excellence and a human coefficient. To put this in another way, in human love each party gives of what he has and is, and there is mutual borrowing and a union of two in one. In the mystery of divine and human love, God gives of Himself, and man receives and is transformed as far as is possible into the likeness of this infinite love. The exchange, indeed, has its own appropriate laws, its pain as well as its raptures. We know from Christian revelation and the sign of the Cross what it cost God, and the transition from one form of life to a higher brings, in fact, excruciating pain to human nature. For just as after the introduction of a foreign body into an organism, there is a period of pain and friction before absorption, so, too, the supernatural life has slowly to dominate and fuse with the natural, and, like the sibyl under the stimulus of God, nature is at first recalcitrant. In fact, the process of fusion is hardly ever fully accomplished before death, and the ecstasy of the saint bears witness as much to the un-

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\* There are degrees, however, within truth. An intuition is higher than reason, self-consciousness deeper than our knowledge of others. Man, as it were, walks round the great orb of truth and can see a certain distance within. God is at the centre and can see all, but not be seen by those outside, save remotely and through other things.

subdued condition of the body and lower faculties as to his union with God. Furthermore, during the process there is little or no experience; to change the metaphor, the seed of divine life is below the ground developing, and faith and good works are required that it should fructify. God does not give favours which are not wanted, but calls on man to do his part, to trust and give of his best for love's sake; the prize is there, but, as in the fairy-tale, it has to be won by effort and trust. But be it observed, though the natural has to yield to the supernatural and, in a sense, to die, there is no final loss, and even in the process there is harmony and not sheer destruction. This truth explains the paradox inherent in the doctrine of Catholicism. It echoes Christ's doctrine of self-abnegation, of hatred of the world; unless the grain of wheat fall into the ground it cannot have life; but it also protects and gives a rare beauty to human nature, and asserts that by virtue of the supernatural alone can the normal concerns of life prosper, liberty refrain from license, and philosophy abide in truth. And this is to claim that Catholicism provides the answer to the needs of mankind, and does so by sending its unruly tribes under the yoke of a divine empire. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all things will be added unto you."

We have now the meaning and vindication of a supernatural religion. Nature, which at first sight might seem to be self-contained and to provide all that was required by the heart of man, points beyond itself, and so mankind has always stretched its hands in longing for a further shore or the advent of a God. God, if He comes, may in all likelihood behave with a divine generosity, and offer the means of unmerited union with Himself. Such a union would be supernatural. Now, Catholicism claims that this has happened, that God came upon earth, that He offered the divine life to men, and that the Catholic Church is not,

as some think, the infirmary for the sick and decrepit, but the home wherein the process of transformation is accomplished. The image is not chosen at random, for Catholicism has its divine prescriptions—the medicine of the Sacraments. Complete obedience is demanded, and its saints die to themselves to live in Christ.

If the argument be accepted so far, the supernatural claim of Catholicism has been made out to be, at least, possible and perhaps probable. Before going on to a more detailed account of it, there are two further tests we can supply. It will speak well for a religion if that religion is intensely and comprehensively human and, nevertheless, escapes the law of human weakness, and, again, if it is superlatively authoritative and oracular, walking the earth like a god, never altering its stride, never looking back, and never stumbling. This is to be natural and supernatural at once, to accord with human needs and defy the laws which govern human inventions. Now, if we were cataloguing man's characteristics and requirements we could conveniently sum them up under the heads of intellect, will or desire, sense and sociability. A religion without a mind soon degenerates into a spiritual or emotional debauch; a religion of reason without appeal to emotion or sense becomes as cold as a sarcophagus, and an institution without spirit dies by the letter of the law. Sociability, too, cannot be left out, because the family is before the individual and the social unit is necessary for the proper expression of personality. By contrast now with most, if not all, other religions, we have this striking phenomenon in Catholicism, that it gives scope for all the instincts and functions of human nature, that it is the home of religious experience and mysticism, that it appeals to the sight and senses by its ritual and choirs and devotions, builds systems of philosophy which are a byword for cold, hard reasoning, produces saints and mystics in every age and of the first order, and, withal, lives as an

institution which is the strictest social organism the world has ever known. There are present, therefore, all the elements which make up human nature, and the balance and harmony of them in one whole are as mysterious and miraculous a creation as the original man himself.

Secondly, and notwithstanding this, there is the supernatural factor to be reckoned with. If God has spoken, His word must have been authoritative and true and, therefore, unchanging and exclusive. Catholicism exacts complete obedience from its members to its declarations on faith or morals; it professes never to have changed one iota of these dogmas and casts out any who prefer change to conservatism, and it continues, despite the growth and decay of all other institutions, as alive to-day as it was ten or fifteen centuries ago. This persistence amid change, unity amid confusing and disrupting tendencies, and majestic authority are signs, so a Catholic would urge, of a divine or supernatural principle of life, and separate his religion from all the passing shows of man.

## CHAPTER II

### *THE NATURE AND CONSTITUTION OF CATHOLICISM*

So far we have dealt for the most part with surmises and probabilities. Now it is time to examine Catholicism more closely. The aim is not to prove by argument the truth of what it teaches, but to help the reader to a fair appreciation of its claims and contents. It must be remembered that every position taken up by Catholicism is surrounded with a network of argument, philosophic and historical, which cannot be given here; and though there are many short-cuts to faith in it the Catholic Church prefers the inquirer to go by the road of intellectual conviction.

Briefly, then, in the Catholic version of history the ancient world shows the long preparation of one nation for the coming of Christ. To all historians, of whatever shade of belief, the Jews present a baffling spectacle. An insignificant and somewhat unamiable people without distinction in art or science or law or political theory, in religion they tower above the contemporary peoples. They worship one true God among polytheists, they move steadily forward, purifying their conceptions, debarred from intercourse with their neighbours' cults, threatened with the direst penalties if they forsake the Law declared from Mount Sinai. They are the children of a Promise and walk in the light of a vocation from on high—God's chosen people, at first a theocracy, then a kingdom kept holy by a law and prophets. Mysterious and symbolic incidents occur, the explanation of which is given only centuries after in a unique Person who resumes them all in the actions of His life; prophets cry to them of some

future event, of a kingdom of righteousness; their words and actions have double meanings, and in their personages they seem, as it were, to be rehearsing a drama not yet written. When, then, the early Christians turned from the story of Israel to that of their Founder, and saw in the background of its scenery the figure of Isaac bound for the sacrifice, Melchisedech, the priest king, making oblation of bread and wine, the royal David and the suffering servant of Jehovah, they realised that all their history moved in the light of Christ and portrayed Him, and that they themselves wore His lineaments. How, and in what way, they did this is the secret of Catholicism which we must now explain.

That Christ was God as well as man is certain and central in Catholic belief, and the statement is made, not by virtue of some religious or mystical experience but on the rational ground that He must be accepted as a divine messenger. There is, it is argued, no other conclusion possible after an unprejudiced investigation of the Gospel narrative. The story makes a consistent whole alone on that supposition. The influence of Christ, His moral character, the nature of His teaching, the miracles which are inseparable from the teaching and influence, His life and death and reappearance either confirm His own claims to speak with divine authority or destroy all the canons of historical criticism. Indeed, the Gospel narrative, if either the godhead or manhood of Christ be removed, becomes as meaningless as the record of the Napoleonic wars without the genius of a Bonaparte. Moreover, the work of Christ, the heritage He left, is marked with a super-human quality. The early Christians certainly were sure that Christ was God and that the Church they were building was not made with hands. If this work was successful they attributed it not to themselves but to divine efficiency. And it is seldom recognised what a marvellous feat the first disciples of Christ per-

formed, a feat quite outside the range of a set of men so limited in mind as they were. For what we find is this : that some provincials of an obscure province of the Empire, uncultured and inexperienced, dropped their Galilean accent and began to talk to humanity at large, and this talk flowed on without any pauses and false starts, changes or fallacies, till it had filled the whole earth and grown into a complex system of truth which has borne the test of science and mysticism and philosophy for nineteen hundred years. Other religions, it is true, have also had a rapid success; but usually then their theology has been fanciful or puerile, or they have fallen back on private experience, or, like Indian philosophies, they have refused the test of experience. Catholicism developed along all the lines of human interest, espoused reason, pinned its faith to historical record and gave an impetus to religious experience, and, nevertheless, found them coinciding and fitting together into a most intricately connected whole, one rent in which would have caused universal confusion. Now, if we take the early Christians for what they were, comparatively simple folk, it is strange enough to find them indulging at all in hazardous speculation, but it is still stranger to find these speculations expanding into a system in which one part instead of contradicting another fits in with it to perfection and reinforces its original meaning. The age was not one of sage thought; philosophy was eclectic and dabbled in the mysterious, and the infant Church had its temptations, as the growth of Gnosticism proves. Nevertheless, the lucidity and width of its thought is equalled only by the balance of judgment and good sense which sprang at every nascent heresy and strangled it. There is a law governing human theories which, as time goes on, becomes more and more evident, and it is this, that falsehood cannot endure. An erroneous view may capture men's minds for a time by the brilliance with which some one

aspect of truth is illuminated and because the lie contained in partiality is at first concealed. When, however, the theory expands and has to be lived, when its implications are developed, it begins to conflict more and more with experience and to betray self-contradictions. A creed of scepticism, for instance, dies in its utterance; a pacifist doctrine falls back on force; a prophet of private religious experience girds at others' private beliefs. Every statement we make has innumerable suppositions which accord with it, whereas the lie is a king without subjects, the cuckoo in the nest which turns out all other fledglings. Catholic doctrine suffered no such destiny; as it grew, it prospered, was consonant with itself and concurring with the sounds of human aspiration "made not a fourth but a star."

But besides the self-consistency in its development, this theology coincided with the facts narrated in the Gospel. In these Gospels the life of Christ is described with a variety of incidents and sayings. A theory might very easily find itself compelled to bowdlerise the story or explain away this awkward saying or narrated fact. So far from this happening with the Catholic doctrine, it disclosed the order and meaning of many otherwise perplexing incidents, so that the theology lit up the story and the story articulated the doctrine. Lastly, and perhaps this is the most remarkable coincidence of all, the doctrine of these uneducated and intransigent Jews proves itself fit to become the universal religion of mankind, and corresponds with the highest experiences of men and women in every age and clime. What at first seemed forbidding and opposed to human nature invigorates a decadent world, and continues without intermission to produce the highest and most attractive examples of holiness which the human race has ever seen.

To many studying this strange history, the Church has been a sufficient demonstration of the divinity of its founder. "There is a King's Highway, and that is

the Church of God and the pathway of truth," wrote St. Epiphanius (A.D. 370), and as will be seen again later in the history of Catholicism, there are certain striking features in His Church which are hard to explain without an appeal to the supernatural.

Whichever way, then, we look, the claims of Jesus Christ to be a divine messenger are substantiated. Now full acceptance of this claim involves a change in one's attitude. Until it is established, the inquiry is pursued critically and on rational grounds; but the conclusion demands forthwith the exercise of another virtue, that of faith. If Christ speaks in the name of God, then His words are authoritative and true, and must be accepted without question. It only remains to find out what His intentions and message were. Here Protestant and Catholic part company; the Protestant (or, at least, the Protestant of the Reformation) believes that the word of God is to be sought in the Bible and there alone, while the Catholic holds that God still speaks through the voice of His Church. That is, the one relies on a book for his religion, the other on a living voice. Of course, they both appeal to the same source, the New Testament, to find out what the mind of Christ was, but they differ in their interpretations of it, the Protestant claiming that Christ intended future generations to live by the record of His life and sayings gathered in several books and in the letters of an Apostle who never knew Him in the flesh, the Catholic, on the other hand, maintaining that Christ passed His authority on to His Apostles and bade them teach in His name till the end of time. The arguments for Protestantism do not, of course, find a place here, and it is also out of the question to present in its fulness, with all the appropriate texts and comments, the argument for the Catholic Church. But a brief synopsis of the Catholic interpretation is both necessary and possible, and it runs as follows.

The work of Christ, God and man, is summed up

in the word Redemption, and the Redemption involved a twofold act on the part of Christ; He had to atone for or make reparation for the evil treatment mankind had meted out to God, and He willed to elevate mankind into a supernatural union of friendship with God. These two ends He accomplished in the sacrifice of Calvary. Sacrifice is the spontaneous and natural act of man in his relation with God, and expresses homage and, if there be sin, expiation also, and the desire to communicate more closely with the divine power and love. It was natural, then, that Christ, the representative of man, should choose this act and use it both as a sign of repentance and a claim on God's favour. The dreadful death served to show forth the meaning of sin, the willingness of men to pay the full price and the generosity of their representative. The God-man as the self-chosen victim dying to give life to the world has always appealed to noble minds as the supreme example of love. His self-sacrifice, too, carried to such an extreme, laid, so to speak, an obligation on God to make a return equally generous, and, in fact, the response came in the greatest gift it was possible to give, namely, Christ Himself and, through Him, divinity.

After Calvary and the Resurrection, Christ is given back to the world; Christ became the first brother among many brethren, dwelling for ever with mankind that all may have life in Him, "that the love which is in me may be in them and I in them." Generally in ancient sacrifice we find the final stage to consist in the consumption of the victim by the worshippers and, as that victim is holy in a very special way, the participants are supposed to share its holiness. This practice and the belief foreshadow the one supreme sacrifice, for in it Christ is given back in order that, to use His own words, "whoso eats His flesh may have life eternal"; or, to put it in another way, Christ was to continue upon earth as the gift of

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God and the giver of life to humanity; and the Catholic Church regards itself as nothing else than the means whereby that life is provided in every age and to the far corners of the world, the organ that is of divine grace, enabling those who so will to live in spirit and in truth in Christ.

This fundamental doctrine may sound at first hearing mysterious and far-fetched; mysterious it certainly is, but not stranger than the words of Jesus Christ Himself when He spoke of the bread of life which He would give "as His own flesh given in sacrifice for the life of the world," and drove many away scandalised. Nothing is more familiar to us than the passing on of life from generation to generation; we know how the child is fed and nourished by its mother, learns from her, and takes on her likeness and traits. Now, no one can read the New Testament without being struck by the emphatic recurrence of the word "life," and the importance given to it by Christ, "Unless ye be born again . . ." "I came to give life and that more abundantly," "I am the way, the truth, and the life." St. Paul, again, has strewn his letters with analogies from regeneration, sonship, and sums up his own Christian experience in the words: "I live, no, not I, but Christ lives in me." In fairness, then, to Christ's teaching and the statements of St. Paul we are entitled to see in these expressions the truth already outlined. The Redemption of Christ has for its effect a new race living with His life, a people, as St. Peter wrote, royal and holy, participating in the divine nature. St. Paul calls this race "a building reared on the foundation of the Apostles, the corner stone being Christ Jesus himself, in union with whom the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising so as to form a holy sanctuary in the Lord"; but the image he prefers is that body of which Christ is the Head. "There is but one body and one spirit. . . . There is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism. . . . We shall lovingly

hold to the truth and shall, in all respects, grow up into union with Him who is our Head, even Christ."

The only possible interpretation of these and many other passages is, Catholics argue, the conception which the Catholic Church has ever held of its own functions and nature. It regards itself as an organism animated supernaturally by the spirit and presence of Christ, as a body of which He is the Head, the humanity of Christ extended through time so as to include every man who is willing to become a member. Follow this clue or hypothesis and the whole complicated structure of Catholicism, with its rules, its assumption of authority, its claim to speak with a living voice and with infallible truth, its hatred of schism, and bond of membership and visible union, its sacraments and Eucharist, will be seen as intelligible and consistent. It speaks with His voice and is, therefore, authoritative and unchanging in its doctrine; it is the body of Christ and, therefore, one in its external ritual and discipline as well as in its faith and mind; and because its purpose is to give life to the world through Christ it provides the means in the sacraments and particularly in the Eucharist, which is the bread of life.

The intentions, then, of Christ are embodied in a Church that is a visible religious society united in doctrine, discipline, and worship. In doctrine, Catholicism distinguishes between its dogmas and speculations about those dogmas by various theologians. The existence, for instance, of Purgatory and Hell is to be believed on faith, but the many current conceptions on their nature are mere opinions or pious beliefs. Theological views, too, may change, and undergo improvement, but the dogmas, on the other hand, are an everlasting possession, being nothing but unambiguous statement of the mind of Christ, known from the beginning and always accepted. They can develop, it is true, for the Church is a living body and grows more conscious of its features and personality,

but the development does not involve alterations. To alter, or to admit error in the past, is equivalent to accusing God of a lie, and his accredited witnesses, the Apostles, of false testimony. What happens is this, that the truths by which the Church lives become more determinate; their implications take time to be fully realised, because, as we know, a pregnant truth is the mother of many children. There is, too, a law discernible in the development, for, historically, the Catholic Church set itself first to define what it meant by God and the Holy Trinity, then passed on to the person and nature of Christ and the interrelation of His Humanity with His godhead. Later it turned its attention to the subject of man, the necessity of grace and the sacraments and the sacrifice of the Mass, and in its later age it has defined the position and privileges of Mary the Mother of Christ and, therefore, nearest to Him by nature, and the Pope the closest to Christ by virtue of his function.

The range of Catholic doctrine is too wide to admit of a full description. It begins with the Holy and undivided Trinity, a mystery of faith—that is, a truth above the capacity of human reason but not irrational. The mind of man, though it can apprehend truth in part, is not the measure of its fulness, and God, who is perfection, truth, and love in one, must overpower the human reason and be, to some extent, impenetrable. So far, then, from mystery being a difficulty in the way of belief, it is corroborative evidence that the belief may be right, because a God who could be invented or reduced to human terms would be no God at all. But there is a difference between a mystery which confronts the mind like a blank wall and a truth which, though above comprehension, co-ordinates what is already known and gives an inkling of the intimate nature of God. Such is the revelation of the Trinity through Christ; for it tells of the ultimate ideal of love, of the intercommunion of

persons in the divine life so close that each is one with the other in nature, multiplicity without a shadow of substantial difference, mutual sharing without separate loss, "Majesty threefold and onefold notwithstanding, trine in threehoods and in one highship." And this ideal is reflected down and tempered in the union of Christ with man, of man and woman—marriage, that is, and family life—and the fellowship of society, and discerned even in the more desolate unities of inanimate creation.

The Catholic dogmas, next in order, are those of Creation and Original Sin. They are both described in the book of Genesis, and many non-Catholics suppose that by these dogmas Catholics mean a belief in the literal and scientific character of all the details in the Bible story. They cry out, then, that the dogmas are irreconcilable with scientific discoveries and the theory of evolution. The view is, however, mistaken. The dogma of creation may, so far as the making of the human body is concerned, fit better with instantaneous creation, but it is compatible with any theory which can be proven. All that is defined is that God, whatever way things came to be and to develop, is ultimately their author. And this declaration is, from the point of view of philosophy, rich in significance. The transcendence of God is brought into relief; He remains Himself unique, with fulness of perfection undiminished whatever He gives or does. But all things depend upon Him, and He is, to use a modern expression, immanent in them, because their very being would vanish away, were the divine activity, which communicates and sustains that being, withdrawn. The dogma, therefore, is not anthropomorphic. God does not, as it were, give an initial push or empty Himself out in His works. Each finite cause is left whole and entire, and each particular nature reveals the transcendent and divine beauty by being just its own limited self. One clause, however, there is, which

may run counter to certain scientific beliefs. The soul of man comes by immediate creation and does not grow out of matter. It may conceivably inform a body which is thus evolved, but spirit is a separate world and reflects the divine and not the brute, and fights against the latter.

Now, the story goes on that God designed to give the first human beings, possessed of soul and body, a vision of innermost truth and unite them with Himself. This was the supernatural end, the free gift of the King Cophetua to the beggar maid, and beggarly man rejected His gift and fell, and having once seen transcendent beauty was ever dissatisfied with his lot and ran wild and made images of what he wanted. His nature pushed him to hope for more than his due, and grace abetted, and God, who was not to be thwarted, sent His only begotten Son to mend the mischief of man's evil choice and to restore all things in Himself. This is the coming of the Kingdom of God, the Word made Flesh, a divine person with a divine nature uniting to Himself a human nature, born of an immaculate Virgin and walking the earth as truth and love incarnate. And, as was said above, the sacrifice of the Cross made atonement superabundantly for all the calamitous doings of man because of the love and the worth of the victim; and the life given in sacrifice was made the means and food of a new life to be consummated in an immortal, divine union with God. And since Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life," could not restrict Himself to a particular time and place, be just an episode in the world's history, He founded an organisation which should continue His presence, should commemorate and actualise in every spot the redemptive act of Calvary, should speak with His voice, His inerrancy, and provide the means for living in and by Him. This was the Church, the extension, as it has been called, of the Incarnate Christ, the visible and social organisa-

tion of which he was to be the head, and Christians the members. Entrance was to be gained to it by a sacrament, a rite signifying and effecting a new birth, Baptism, and by an act of faith, which meant the willing homage of the recruit, the promise to accept to the full the authority and teaching of the Word of God. The new life, begun in promise, was fulfilled in the Eucharist, the memorial and enactment of the sacrifice of Calvary and the gift of the real flesh and blood of Christ as the food of the new member. If, again, that life was destroyed by an act of infidelity, a grave refusal to obey God's will by sin, the sacrament of Penance was there to infuse again the regenerating life, on confession of sin and promise of amendment. And similarly with the other sacraments, they are the channels whereby the waters of divine refreshment flood the soul at the momentous moments of life—adolescence, marriage, priesthood, and death. These seven sacraments are not, of course, wonder-working rites like magic, which act independently of man or as means of bending God against His wish. They are God's free gift, and as experience comes into the mind through the organs of the senses, so, too, the divine life is conducted into the soul by appointed ways. Man can dam the channel by his will, or open the sluice wider by a good disposition, but he cannot choose how he will accept God's grace or dictate to God the laws of the supernatural life.

The Church, then, is the extension of the life of Christ upon earth, the vehicle and teacher of truth, "the spiritual womb," as Aquinas called it, of the new creature in Christ, feeding him on the sacraments. The organisation of this Church is in accord with its function, and its combined human and divine nature. "One God, one Christ, one Church," said St. Cyprian. As Christ was King, or ruler, priest and teacher, so the Church exercises His rights, and binds and looses on earth what shall be bound and loosed

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also in Heaven—that is, it governs with legislative, judicial, and executive powers. Secondly, it offers the one form of sacrifice, continuing in the liturgy of the Mass, by the ministry of priests, the one sacrifice of Christ; and lastly, by virtue of the words, “As my Father hath sent me so also I send you,” it goes forth and teaches the nations all truth. Furthermore, these powers are determined by the appointment of Christ, and abide in the Head together with the Church as a whole. The first declaration of the early Church after the Ascension of Christ is prefaced by the astounding words, “It has been decided by the Holy Ghost and by Us,” and, thereafter, the same declaration echoes from the lips of Popes, because of the famous promise of the keys, the prayer of Christ, “I have prayed for thee (Peter) that thy faith fail not and do thou strengthen thy brethren,” and the commission to Peter to feed the lambs and sheep of the flock. In Peter, therefore, and his successors, the Bishops of Rome, resided the plenitude of power and jurisdiction as shepherds and rulers; and necessarily, if the Church was to be pillar and ground of truth, infallibility attached to this office. Popes might be weak-minded and depraved in habits, nevertheless, in their official pronouncements, when speaking in the name of the whole Church on what concerned its doctrinal or moral teaching, they could not give the lie to Christ. This, then, is the simple meaning of infallibility, and it has nothing to do with inspiration, personal holiness, or private wisdom. God has promised to give mankind the truth and the life, and his official spokesman must faithfully transmit the message and the means.

The Pope is the supreme Bishop and head of the Church, but under his jurisdiction there are the Bishops, the successors of the Apostles and teachers of the flock by divine institution. Below these again are priests and laity, and religious orders, male and

female. They live together in the unity of the faith with the one worship, an organic society, catholic and holy, the visible body of Christ. The parts of it, as have been seen, fit together and make a consistent whole; the divine character of it gives it a rule of life distinct from that of any human institution; it is the teacher of truth, that is, dogma which cannot be altered; it is authoritative, and it is infallible. From the earliest times the Catholic Church claimed these characteristics. St. Irenaeus (A.D. 178) is representing the universal view when he writes: "There being such proofs to look to, we ought not still to seek amongst others for the truth which it is easy to receive from the Church, seeing that the Apostles most fully committed unto the Church as into a rich repository all whatsoever is of truth, that whosoever willetteth may draw out of it the drink of life." Origen (A.D. 210) says much the same: "We are not to give heed to those who say, Behold here is Christ but show him not in the Church, which is filled with brightness from the East even unto the West; which is filled with true light, is the pillar and ground of the truth, in which as a whole is the whole advent of the Son of Man, who saith to all men throughout the universe, Behold I am with you all the days of life, even unto the consummation of the world." While Lactantius, a century later, is equally emphatic: "The Catholic is, therefore, the only one who retains the true worship; this is the source of truth; this is the dwelling-place of faith; this is the temple of God, which, whosoever enters not or from which whosoever departs, he is an alien from the hope of life and eternal salvation."

These last words state a view which has so often scandalised non-Catholics that this chapter had better conclude with a short explanation of its meaning. It is certainly part of the Catholic teaching that outside the Church there is no salvation, and a superficial reading of this has led many to think that Catholics

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hold that all who are not visible members of the Catholic Church go to Hell. The impression, however, is quite false, for the phrasing of the text is technical, and its meaning a logical development of the general doctrine of Catholicism already sketched. As Pius IX. in 1854 declared, "Those who suffer from real ignorance of religion, if they cannot conquer it, are not bound by any fault herein before the eyes of the Lord. And now who will arrogate to himself so much as to think that he can define the limits of such ignorance according to the nature and variety of peoples, places, temperaments, and so many other things!" . . . , but he goes on, nevertheless, to say: "Let us most firmly hold that according to Catholic doctrine, there is one God, one Faith, one Baptism, and to go further (in an enquiry as to the fate of souls) were sin." This statement is plain. Christ, who is God and Lord of all men, has appointed one means to reach truth and union with Himself. That means is the Catholic Church. If a man wilfully disobeys God's command and refuses the means, he cannot possibly reach the end, Heaven, promised by God. Everlasting happiness for man is in Christ, the God-man, and no other, just as human beings cannot please themselves even in their relations with other people. A superior puts his terms before a subject; a country lays down its conditions for citizenship in its constitution. God, then, expresses quite clearly what conditions have to be observed for men to please Him. The rejection of these conditions spells loss to man and not to God, and since Hell is strictly the loss of God, Hell is the end of disobedience or heresy, or, indeed, any grave act of rebellion of which the offender does not repent. But there are many who by no fault of their own are outside the Catholic Church, either because they have never been brought to a knowledge of its existence and claims, or because its claims seem honestly, at the time, to be false for some

reason or other. The destiny of these, according to Catholic doctrine, is to be left to God, but in so far as they are in good faith they cannot suffer for their separation from the visible Church.

There is, therefore, the visible Church of Christ, the Ark of Salvation, the city set on a hill, the King's Highway of Epiphanius, the place, which as Origen (A.D. 240) declared, "is filled with brightness from the East even unto the West," consisting to-day of the three hundred millions in every part of the world in obedience to the Vicar of Christ, the Bishop of Rome. But there is also the vast multitude who, through accident or false leadership or lack of intellectual conviction, do not belong to the visible membership of the Catholic Church, and yet in desire are one with Christ, because they seek the living truth and have not denied it by their principles or practice. These are certainly not outside salvation, they are the unknown brethren, separated now from Catholics by schism, or dislike, or even opposition. But mistakes made in ignorance are ever remediable, and there is only one sin against the Holy Ghost, presumption, or, shall I say, self-sufficiency.

## CHAPTER III

### *THE HISTORY OF CATHOLICISM*

THE synoptic Gospels end with the commission of Christ to his Apostles to go forth and teach authoritatively in His name. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go forth, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and teach them to obey every command which I have given you. And remember I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." In this concise expression of authority, doctrinal truth, and continuing presence, we have the epitome of Catholicism, and in the Acts of the Apostles and letters of St. Paul we are presented with the story of its growth. The new religion spread rapidly, and the development of organisation and doctrine kept pace with the numerical increase. "What a richness, what a fulness was there!" Harnack exclaims. "Each point seems to be the chief, not to say the whole. Christianity is the preaching of God the Father Almighty, of His Son Jesus Christ, the Lord, and of the resurrection. It is the gospel of the Saviour and of salvation, of redemption, and of a new creation; it is the tidings of godliness. It is the gospel of love and charitable works. It is the religion of the Spirit and of power, of moral seriousness and holiness. It is the religion of authority and of absolute faith, but it is also the religion of reason and of clear understanding, and it is also a sacramental religion. It is the news of an entirely new race, which, nevertheless, pre-existed secretly before the beginning of things. It is the

religion of a sacred book. All that can be called religion it possesses: all that can be called religion it is."

Now the explanation of this rich content coalescing and harmonising without friction or loss lay, as Paul and John and the early Christians were convinced, in the continued presence of Christ in their midst. Christ Himself had likened the Kingdom of God to "a mustard-seed which becometh a tree and shooteth out great branches, so that the birds of the air come and lodge under the shadow thereof," but He had also spoken of Himself as the great Vine. "I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit, but apart from me you can do nothing." It is in this image that the secret of Catholic life and success from the beginning is hidden. The first Christians were aware that their Founder was no longer with them to see and to touch, but they were so imbued with a sense of His presence and coming that some of them appear even to have expected His rapid return in the flesh. This expectation rested on a mistaken interpretation of the doctrine of Parousia or presence, but it also witnesses to the prevailing belief in a presence of some sort. The true nature of that presence is fully stated in the first letter of St. Paul, but it is brought into relief by the last gospel, in the Parable of the Vine and the majestic prologue of the Word made Flesh dwelling amongst us. Read in the light of these texts, and much else in the New Testament, the promise of Christ that He would be with His disciples all days implies a union with them of a very special kind. And the Catholic Church is but gathering up the various texts and asserting their full implications when it declares that it is a divine-human institution, the body of Christ, members and Head, with infallible authority, and the Word of God ever on its lips when carrying out its teaching office.

Before proceeding, therefore, with its history we can surmise the future of the infant Church as clearly as a biologist can state the development of some organism whose species he has determined. The Catholic body will fill out, but the same life of order and unity will continue to circulate within it, the functions will become more definite, the shape more precise, and on no condition can there be a change in its mind or will. As in man there is soul and body, so in the Church there will be divine and human characteristics. The divine will be seen in the authority, in the superlative and unchanging nature of the doctrine and in the special type of holiness. The human will be seen in the unessential adaptations of thought to cultures and climates, the visible means adopted, and the varying weakness and strength of some of the members or branches.

After this forecast the actual historical development of Catholicism is not difficult to follow; its sacred unity in Christ grows more and more pronounced in organisation, doctrine, and worship. The first is seen well in the doom of excommunication hurled at offending members. To think false doctrine, to sin without repentance was to sever oneself from the blood-relationship with the Lamb of God. Penitents, as it is well known, were kept for long periods from visible communion in the sacred mysteries, and openly to disobey one's Bishop was to deny Christ. The general attitude of mind is admirably expressed in the writings of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, martyred under Trajan. "It behoves you to regard the Bishop as the Lord Himself. For there is only the one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and the one chalice in the unity of the blood, one altar as there is one Bishop with priesthood and deacons." Add to the statements the admission of Ignatius that the Roman Church has the presidency of the confraternities of Christ, and the authoritative

action and language of Pope Clement I. in a letter to the Christians of Corinth, and we have before us in the first century a picture of the Catholic Church to-day.

The next two hundred years are a period of comparative seclusion. Prosecuted and banished underground, Catholicism grew to adolescence, and in the dim light of the catacombs frescoed a beardless Good Shepherd carrying the milk of divine nourishment, or celebrated the mysteries of the Eucharist, the fish bearing on its back a basket of bread with a vessel of wine set also within, on altars whereunder lay the bones of Christian martyrs. The young Church had to suffer in the crucible of pain, silence, and neglect, before it was fully equipped to undertake the rescue of a dying civilisation. Other trials there were, too; their doctrine did not go unchallenged, and there have come down to us a series of defences of the faith called *Apologies*, of which the most famous are those by Justin. At that time, also, strange religions were deluging Rome, and the Christians had to make a sharp distinction between their cult and those of Cybele, Isis, and Mithra, and disprove the charge of borrowing from them, due to apparent or fancied resemblances. But there was a still graver and more insidious danger, and that within the Church as well as without, a danger which may be summed up in the word "*Gnosticism*." The word may be strange, but the views denoted by it are a recurrent malady of the soul. In every age, but particularly in a period of decline, men and women have recourse to the strange and esoteric, to the morbid and pseudo-mystical. In the first centuries of Christianity the Gnostics professed an inner wisdom, talked strangely of purity, and contrasted the holiness of spirit with the evil of sense and of material things. Their theology, as always, looks like an infernal parody of the Christian, with its mystery, its illuminism, its celestial hierarchy,

its intermediaries between God and man. But the Church cast the thing from her, and would have none of it, and taught men instead to reverence the earth and all God's works, to cherish the body of our flesh because Christ did not disdain it. At times there have been murmurings, "Why this waste?" as Judas complained of Magdalen, and the incense and the lights and the coloured vestments, and the rosaries and the blest waters and images and chrisms have been decried as too sensuous and superstitious. The answer is that the Word was made Flesh, and all the earth can serve as an embodiment of the spirit. Man grows by his senses, and without them he is lost in the darkness of abstract thought. No right conception of purity is possible without reverence for the body and marriage, and love asks for visible presence, for the clasp of hands and the kiss. Love of country may be mirrored in an English lane or "a woodway palely lit with primroses where children sit," as Blessed Juliana saw the love of God in a hazel-nut. And no religion is complete which does not allow for the ecstasy of the Saint of Assisi before his brothers and sisters, the earth and sky and the flower and the bird.

When, then, the change in the official attitude towards Catholicism came under Constantine (A.D. 306-337), the Church had been acclimatised and its constitution inoculated. The task which lay before it was formidable. The Roman Empire had stood in the mind of all as the imperishable symbol of law and order; now its light was flickering out, and an inexperienced and unworldly body, whose virtue had been tested chiefly in its willingness to die to make a Roman holiday, had to carry on its functions, adapt itself to a pagan and barbaric world, and infuse into it its own life and power. Doctrine and worship had concerned the Emperors little, they freely admitted newcomers into their Pantheon as long as their own images were worshipped, and the unity they had

preserved had been political, and never religious. Catholicism could not rule on these terms, and yet to keep the unity of the faith in doctrine and worship amid all the disrupting influences of a vast Empire seemed, on human calculations, an impossible programme. That it succeeded is one of the happy chances of history or evidence of its supernatural power.

The firstfruits of the new status of the Church are seen in the intellectual exploits of the fourth and fifth centuries, and the perfecting of its organisation. Great figures move across the stage, orators, intellectual paladins, and pontiffs, and by the end of the fifth century the doctrinal integrity of the faith had been secured after fierce disputes and the hurryings to and from œcumeneal councils. Not that the Church had been idle even before. In the second century, at Alexandria, the heir of the learning of Athens, Origen and Clement had tried to spoil the Egyptians, and with them the wisdom of the Greeks. Great as their successes were, the effort was premature, because the philosophy in vogue at Alexandria was a blend of many systems, ill-assorted, and contaminated with Egyptian and Syrian sorcery. But the great Christians of the period handed on a tradition of learning, and taught the Church not to fear the pagan philosophies. Catholicism was an affair of the mind as well as the heart, and the Logos was its guide and inspiration. Soon, therefore, we find the traditional belief garbed in philosophical language, and Councils called to adjudicate on disputed points of theology.

The first Council was held at Nicæa in A.D. 325, under the presidency of the papal legate Hosius, and in the presence of 318 bishops. The point at issue was a critical one, for it concerned the divinity of Christ, the Arians and the semi-Arians maintaining that He and the Father were unlike in substance or only like, while Athanasius defended the identity of Father and

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Son in substance (the Homoousion doctrine). Arius was condemned, and the decision of the Council was confirmed by Pope Sylvester, and though the accession of an Arian Emperor made the whole world "groan to find itself Arian" (St. Jerome), the creed was safe, and the divinity of Christ, which had always been recognised, was set beyond cavil. In A.D. 381 came a second Council, that of Constantinople, in which the divinity of the Third Person of the Trinity was affirmed, and in A.D. 431, at Ephesus, the third Council met.

This Council of Ephesus is interesting on many counts; it is the first Council of which we have the acts in full, and both the subject in dispute and the mode of procedure are oddly modern. The subject-matter was the relation of the Godhead to the manhood in Christ. Like certain writers to-day, Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, held that there were two persons in Christ, the human person being adopted and sanctified by the Second Person of the Trinity. It followed from this that Mary could no longer be called the Mother of God. This view came to the notice of Cyril of Alexandria, and, outraged by it, he attacked Nestorius, and wrote to Pope Celestine for advice. Celestine replied, telling Cyril to excommunicate Nestorius if he did not retract within ten days, and in a letter to Nestorius he threatened to cut him off from communion with the whole Catholic Church. This high action of the Pope reads curiously, save on a certain theory of the Pope's prerogatives. Nestorius, however, prevaricated, and asked for a public hearing of his case, so a Council was called, with Cyril acting for Celestine as president at Ephesus, "where the error of Nestorius was excluded under the presidency of Celestine, of the City of Rome, and Cyril, of the City of Alexandria" (Letter of the Emperors). The Council, be it noted, was made up of Eastern bishops, with the exception of three delegates from Rome, and

these Eastern bishops delivered judgment against Nestorius, "necessarily impelled by the sacred canons and the letter of our most holy father and fellow-minister Celestine." The Council, therefore, acknowledges that the case of Nestorius has already been decided. No wonder, then, Philip, one of the three Roman delegates, on his arrival, could thus address the assembled Easterns : "In applauding the letters of our blessed Pope, holy members of the Council, you are united to the holy head. For your reverences are not ignorant that the Blessed Apostle Peter is the head of all the Society of believers and of the Apostles themselves." The likeness right across the centuries between this statement and the formularies of the Vatican Council in 1870 are surely remarkable. We see the organisation clearly defined, the headship of the Pope readily admitted and by the Easterns ! The relation, too, between Council and Pope can be read between the lines. The former is the intellectual instrument used by the Pope when he wishes his will to be well-informed or justified before the bar of the world. In the fourth and fifth century, when an accurate formula for a fundamental dogma was required, the deliberations of a General Council were requisitioned. At all times, however, a Council is an unwieldy instrument, and after the experience of the first six, the Church began to rely more and more on the central authority of Rome, which could decide promptly questions of the hour and enforce its decisions.

The Councils which followed are similar in character to those already mentioned. They each articulate some truth about the nature of Christ or unmask some false teaching. Heresies in this fervid period kept breaking out like blisters, and the great doctors of the Church were busy maintaining the good health of the Church. With so many strange pagan philosophies and religions floating round, it is a

wonder that Catholicism never for a moment lost its truth. An infallible good sense moved easily through the misty waters, and genius was ever present to support good sense. In the East the Gregories and Basils and Cyrils united Greek learning with love for the Word made Flesh, Chrysostom, the orator, held his vast congregations spellbound by his homilies, Jerome in the desert gave us the Vulgate version of the Scriptures, while the Roman genius worked out the canon law of the Church, refashioned the pagan code of morals, and gave us the model of liturgical music and the Roman rite of the Mass.

But the greatest personality of all in this period was born in Africa, then one of the most flourishing provinces of the Roman Empire. Famous already in Christendom as the nursing-mother of Tertullian and Cyprian, Africa gave to the Church, in Augustine, a second Paul of Tarsus. With him the intellectual hegemony passes from the East to the West. At first a Manichean, then a Platonist, and finally converted through the prayers of his mother, Monica, he brought into the captivity of Christ the wisdom of Plato and Plotinus, and handed over an intellectual system, in the Latin tongue, which prevailed to the thirteenth century, and continues still to be the vivid portrait of that "Beauty ever ancient and ever new" which it set out to describe. The author of that matchless classic *The Confessions*, the Doctor of Grace and of the Trinity, the hammer of heretics, Donatists and Pelagians, the artist of the City of God, he stamps all he does with his irrepressible genius. The secret of his success lies in his combination of love with wisdom. "I invoke thee, O my God, the Truth." "Too late have I loved thee, O Beauty." "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are unhappy till they rest in Thee." Quite foreign, therefore, to his thought was the modern separation of theology or metaphysics and religious experience. "In heaven

our food is truth," and the Logos was both the light which illumines the soul to seek and the object of all desire. His *Confessions* relate the dialogue between the soul and the God transcendent and yet within, and they have set the theme which Catholic mystics have lovingly sung ever since. But—and this is the culminating point in his spiritual insight—the Word of Truth was made flesh and dwells in the Church, the mystical body of Christ; and entranced with this thought he flashes in an almost bewildering way at times, from the reality of Christ's flesh and blood in the Eucharist to the mystical aspect of it, the Church, in whose unity and lordly jurisdiction man is deified. "I would not believe in the Gospel did not the authority of the Church invite me to do so," and again : "If you have well received (the Eucharist) you are what you have received. For the Apostle says : 'One bread, one body are we many.'"

This period, then, of which St. Augustine is the outstanding figure among giants, is conspicuous for its intellectual activity. Some modern critics have been inclined to see in it a departure from the early Christian tradition. They argue that theology has usurped the place of religious experience, and that the dogmas are but tentative essays, and not a final edition of truth. The criticism rests on a grievous misunderstanding, due to a confusion of Christian theology with other sciences. Admittedly these latter progress, and in the process old formulæ are superseded. Even with them, however, there are constants; and when we turn to the work of the Christian theologians what we find is that they are not seeking for new knowledge as in science, but for an accurate and irreprehensible statement of what they already knew. They are like a family drawing the likeness of their father; the results are judged by the likeness which all can test. The Councils and doctors of the Church had their eyes always on Christ; they knew Him and saw

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He was divine as well as human, and on this certainty they drew up their formularies and worked out the consequences. They were not interested primarily in philosophy; the system they used might be inadequate, but its terms could still serve to make clear to illiterate as well as literate the meaning of their Faith. They did not even appeal to religious experience, for they felt sure that intellectual probity would be approved by the heart; Christ had spoken, and in His divine revelation truth and beauty, as Augustine found, had kissed.

The centuries which followed are known as the Dark Ages. Providentially Catholicism had prepared itself for a period of stress and turmoil by tightening its organisation and encouraging Monachism. As the word signifies, monks were men who went out, following the counsel of Christ, to live a life of solitude, of fasting and prayer in the service of God. The habit had begun very early in the East, and the deserts of Egypt and Syria and Pontus were soon populated by hermits and rudely organised communities. Gradually the West followed suit, and monasteries sprang up in Italy and Gaul and Ireland. But the practices of the East were not entirely suited to the West, and a genius was needed to adapt the life to European tastes. That genius was forthcoming in St. Benedict, the author of the famous rule which so many orders of monks were to adopt. The principles of the life were simple and sublime, the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, with a life of prayer and labour under the motto of Pax. The result was almost magical. The hillsides and river-banks of Europe were soon starred with buildings cloistered and majestic, with Abbey churches often attached, Subiaco and Monte Cassino, Cluny and Clairvaux, Tintern and Fountains, and innumerable others where learning thrrove amid the accumulated manuscripts, and a sanctuary was found in a lawless age for peace and music and art and holiness. To

them we owe in main part the European tradition of culture threatened at the time by barbarism.

The decline of the Roman Empire went on rapidly after the fourth century. The substitution of Byzantium for Rome as the imperial seat, in fact, if not in theory, left Italy helpless and, incidentally, did much harm to the Christian East, because the Emperors ruled there over Church and State alike as caliphs. The only authority left was the moral power of the Papacy, and in time it came to be regarded as the only bulwark against the barbarian. Wave after wave of Goth and Visigoth and Hun flung itself on the Mediterranean lands. In 493 Italy was occupied for a while by the Ostrogoths, and in 568 the Lombards ended the rule of the Byzantine Emperors over Rome and devoured its substance, like the suitors of Penelope, till their defeat by Charlemagne in 774. The Vandals harried Spain, and the Visigoths came in their wake, till they, in turn, succumbed to the Moor. During this storm the Church alone stood firm like a lighthouse. There is the story of Pope Leo going out to meet Attila the Hun and saving Rome. In Gaul Clovis the Frank was baptized at Rheims, and in England a succession of great bishops and the Christian King Alfred kept the ancient faith alight. Protestant and Catholic historians alike vie with one another in the generosity of their praise of the Church. "It was the Christian Church, with its institutions, its magistrates, and its power, that vigorously resisted both the internal dissolution of the Empire and barbarism; which conquered the barbarians and became the bond, the medium and the principle of civilisation between the Roman and the barbarian worlds" (Guizot).

The victory, then, rested with the Church, and the fruits of victory were a wide extension of ecclesiastical power and a Catholic Europe. Intrepid missionaries, Patrick in Ireland, Augustine of Canterbury in

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England, and Boniface in Germany had been busy, and their work and that of their successors had been aided by the closely organised unity of the Church. The Angles who were angels had stirred the zeal of a far-distant Pontiff Gregory, and it was "he," as the Venerable Bede wrote, "who made our nation, till then given up to idols, the Church of Christ." The success of the Church is embodied in the alliance struck between the great Frankish King Charlemagne and Pope Leo III. in the year 800. With that alliance the Holy Roman Empire came to birth, and unfortunately with it the long rivalry between the temporal and spiritual sovereignty. The theory in this division was simple, and one which Europe is still hankering after, but feudal rights and jealousies of Guelph and Ghibelline and ambitions made the ideal impracticable then. Both Church and State suffered, for hardly had an Emperor been humiliated at Canossa than an anti-pope was created by him to wreak his vengeance.

The quarrel between Church and Empire was only one of the griefs of an age slowly recovering from the devastation and alarms of war. As always happens, a reaction set in after success, and a general laxity of morals spread among laity and clergy alike. A note of sadness pervades the literature of the period, magnificently expressed in the hymn *Dies Iræ*. The world wept while it begged for grace, and awaited in fear the day of doom, thought to be near at hand. Gradually matters improved. The wild passions of the Knights were stayed by the truce of God or diverted to the ideal of the Crusades. Great reforming popes like Hildebrand tightened the reins of discipline, and monasteries like Citeaux encouraged a virtue as pure and austere as the snowy heights on which they were built. A dramatic art sprang up, and simple plays made familiar to the people the story of the Old and the New Testaments. Minstrels sang holy as well as profane songs and gave us the Golden Legend, while

the lay-folk wandered far in pilgrimage to Rome or Compostella and flocked to local shrines at Tours or Canterbury or Walsingham.

Thus slowly a Christian society grew up. But the chief means of education lay, undoubtedly, in the Mass and liturgy. The cathedrals and village churches became the centre of village life; there peace and beauty were restored, and the children lived under the shadow of the Cross and round an altar. The chanting of the office taught prayer and knowledge of the Bible, and the minster bell summoned the village folk to join in the ecumenical act of the sacrifice of the Mass. No wonder that the piety of the time is marked by a special tenderness for the humanity of Christ and found its full expression in the Saint of Assisi, who bore in his own flesh the marks of the Passion!

The full recovery of medieval Christendom can be dated conveniently about 1200. The thirteenth century has been acclaimed as the greatest of centuries, as the golden age of Catholicism. It is easy to exaggerate, and there is a dark as well as bright side to it. For us its chief significance lies in this, that it presents the closest approximation to a unified Christian culture ever reached. In the first centuries Christianity was a religion apart, concentrated on the development of its supernatural life and dogma. After the fall of the Roman Empire and the dissolution of the old civilisation, a new society had to be created, and in this period we see the social character of Catholicism, its harmony, that is, with the ordinary, natural life of mankind. Its influence reached Parliament, cheapside and hearth. The ideal of Christian marriage and family life was set up, guilds and confraternities of craftsmen and merchants were established under the protection of a patron saint—for instance, a Crispin or Bartholomew—and pledged to Christian justice and equity; knighthood was consecrated by a vigil and

vows to Our Lady, and companies of Knights were formed, Templars and Hospitallers. Learning was protected and privileged, and degrees were conferred in a ritual akin to that of priesthood. Still higher in the scale came Kingship, with the anointing and clothing in cope of State. And in these successive stages of sanctification of common and rare vocations and pursuits can be discerned the law that the higher the authority the more binding its duties. Service corresponds with privilege, obligations with authority, and no office was to be a sinecure, a mere opportunity for pleasure. The Pope, for instance, just because he was the spiritual overlord, held also the title of "Servant of the servants of God." The Middle Ages will never be understood without the appreciation of this order and correspondence of rights and duties between master and servant, class and class, nation and nation.

Admittedly, the ideal entertained was never fully realised, but the principle was recognised, and trespassers against it did not call themselves guiltless. In this the Medievalist differed from later generations, who did not even agree upon the principle or ideal. We shall not see for a long while a public official or financier walk freely with a rope round his neck through London streets or bare his back to a scourge as Henry II. did after the murder of St. Thomas à Becket. Moreover, even if the ideal was never fully reached, something very splendid was accomplished, especially in the thirteenth century. The customs, pleasures, and institutions all look definitely upward, the people we meet in records and literature are delightfully alive, and whatever they turned their hands to they adorned; homestead, manor-house, castle and church are almost without exception beautiful, and religion gave wings to the spirit in choirs and stained-glass windows, in the art of the Van Eycks or Fra Angelico, and the poetry of a *Divina Commedia*. Never was learning held in higher esteem,

never were the Universities more thronged; royalty justified its high pretensions in a St. Louis of France, and Christ walked the earth again in His humble followers, Francis and Dominic.

The thirteenth century is notable also for its intellectual activity. Its greatest achievements were due, undoubtedly, to the newly risen orders of Dominican and Franciscan friars, but the causes go back a long way. The monasteries had made a renascence of learning possible, and Charlemagne, by bringing over Alcuin from England to his Court and by wise legislation, helped on the good work of the monks and clergy. Courses were opened for divinity students, and from these abbey and cathedral schools, helped on by the town guilds, sprang the Universities. A successful teacher at Chartres or Bologna or Paris attracted students from all quarters, and charters were drawn up organising students and studies. In time, partly owing to the brilliant lectures of William of Champeaux and Abelard, Paris outstripped all the others. There youths gathered from all over Europe to listen to the school of St. Victor and Peter Lombard, the author of *The Sentences*, and later to Albert the Great, Aquinas, and Duns Scotus.

The difference between the work of the thirteenth century masters and of the early Fathers is that between an opportunist and a systematic theology. The early thinkers had borrowed right and left, being concerned chiefly, if not solely, with an accurate statement of a dogma. They held the ruby, and troubled little about its setting. The work even of a St. Augustine is fragmentary, and the Platonic framework of his thought, while it suited the loftier truths of religion well, did not seem to fit the more human portions of Catholic doctrine. When studies revived after Charlemagne, the works of Denis the Areopagite (so called) and Boethius were much in favour, and they, with the system of Augustine, prevailed up to

the thirteenth century. Aristotle was known only through some of his logical treatises, while Plato was represented by the *Timæus*, and the *Meno* and the Christian tradition of his philosophy. Meantime, Arabian influences began to affect the teaching at Paris. Avicenna and Averrhoes were well acquainted with Aristotle; they were, therefore, better equipped than the Catholic scholars, but their interpretations did not square with Christian thought. A considerable danger arose, because the youth of the time were passionate lovers of philosophy, even to the shedding of blood, and their intemperance might easily lead them into a pantheism or heresy irreconcilable with Catholicism.

The situation was saved by Aquinas. A member of the new order of Preachers, he studied under Albert the Great, a man of wide learning and an admirer of Aristotle. Taking his cue from Albert, Aquinas broke with the Platonic tradition and daringly embraced Aristotelianism, and on its basis, before his early death at forty-eight, he built up a vast, closely interrelated system, which included harmoniously within it the whole teaching of the Church. The *Summa contra Gentiles* is the easiest to read; the *Summa Theologiae* is his masterpiece, and contains a reasoned defence or explanation of God, creation, the supernatural, the relation of faith and reason, and the chief dogmas of revelation. St. Thomas is not the only great scholastic—St. Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, and, much later, Suarez, and many another have been his rivals—but Catholics have accepted his synthesis as the most representative statement of their position. Lying midway between the extremes of materialism and pantheism, and attractive by its combination of common sense and deep metaphysics, it has a claim to be called the perennial philosophy of mankind, and its continued vitality, even outside Catholicism, and present influence go to support this claim.

After the splendour of the thirteenth century the record of the later Middle Ages makes sad reading. A period of intellectual stagnation set in, scandals broke out, and a general discontent began to make itself felt. The essential life of Catholicism, indeed, flowed on, and it would be easy to enumerate great saints and mystics like Catherine of Siena, Eckhart, Suso, and Gerson, to linger over the rich beauty of Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* and the charitable institutions for the suffering and the redemption of captives. But the Church which had set out to cure human society and inspire it with its ideals, exposed itself carelessly to those very diseases which it was its duty to eradicate. Many of the Church dignitaries showed a lamentable want of the virtues required by their office, and corrupt manners crept into the Papal Court. The Papacy lost prestige in the eyes of Europe by residing at Avignon for seventy years in a Babylonian captivity. This dependence on France alienated other princes, and led to natural discontent. Worse was to follow, for, on the return of the Popes to Rome, the bonds of obedience were loosened by rival claimants to the Papal chair. And while Pope fought against anti-Pope, lesser feuds and scandals went unchecked. The chief scandal was ended by the Council of Constance, but the evil effects remained. National diets and synods usurped ecclesiastical authority, and ecclesiastics like Wolsey served their King rather than their God, though the voice of the national saint, Joan of Arc, was heard protesting against the injustice of local tribunals. "I appeal to the judgment of our holy father the Pope, and I wish to believe all that holy Church believes."

A strong, reforming Pope was needed and an enlightened body of bishops and theologians. Neither was forthcoming. There were, indeed, saints like Pope Celestine, but "he made the great refusal," and great churchmen like William of Wykeham, Wayn-

flete, and Nicholas of Cusa, but they were lost in the host of less zealous ecclesiastics. The Inquisition, which had been set up as an instrument of justice to help infidel and Christian alike, served to check the pernicious views of the Albigensians and Flagellants, who went about slashing themselves like the ancient priests of Cybele. But, whatever justification it may have had—and it must be remembered that heresy at that time was regarded as at least as unsocial as treason now or conspiracy—the Inquisition was but a negative means. The theologians, who should have kept abreast with the changing ideas of the time, consumed their energies on subtleties and in their indiscriminating adherence to the name of Aristotle helped to bring about the Galileo fiasco. It is not surprising, therefore, that Luther, who had been brought up in the bad tradition of Nominalism, introduced a sharp division between faith and reason. When, then, the New Learning invaded Italy and the Universities after the fall of Constantinople, there was far too little effort “to dress it to a dexterous order,” the existing order, that is, of scholastic and Catholic thought. Well might the poet have prayed in that time that “Sappho should lay her burning brow on white Cecilia’s lap of snow.” St. Cecilia, unfortunately, was forgotten, and the Papal Court, which should have been attending to the Kingdom of Christ at home and in the new world just then discovered, played with pagan masks, and decorated holy places with statues of Olympian Gods. Alexander VI.\* was making for himself a name as

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\* The distinction between the Pope as a man and his office is well brought out in a quaint incident recorded of this time. A mystic, brought into the presence of Pope Alexander VI., “kissed the hem of the garment of the Vicar of Christ and went into an ecstasy, during which she denounced God’s judgments on the sins of Roderigo Borgia.” A similar mingling

ill-sounding as that of Judas, and before the Church gave heed to the warning of its saints, a half of Europe had seceded from its allegiance, and Western Christianity suffered the calamity of a divided faith.

It has been necessary to paint in the dark colours of the later Middle Ages with a heavy brush to make subsequent events intelligible. With the Reformation a new phase in the history of Catholicism begins. So far the growth of European civilisation and Catholicism make one story, now they separate. Instead of being the sap, it comes to be regarded by some as the medicine, by others as the poison of the European body politic. The change, of course, was not completed immediately, but the principles were laid in the sixteenth and worked out fully in the nineteenth century. The history consequently of the Church becomes uneventful, domestic rather than public, and one is obliged to concentrate on its spirit more than on its actions. The immediate effect of the rise of Protestantism was to produce the Counter Reformation. It is doubtful whether, at the beginning, the Papacy realised the full significance of Luther and his fellow-reformers. Heresies had happened before and unity had been restored, and it was inconceivable, then, that Christendom could be permanently divided. Nevertheless, measures too long delayed were at length taken.

The Counter Reformation was set on foot, new religious orders sprang into being, theologians and missionaries hastened to the field of combat, and the Council of Trent was summoned to deal with abuses, discuss disputed doctrines, and mobilise the fighting strength of the Church.

To the Council of Trent the Protestants were invited, but they did not come. The Catholic Church,

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of reverence and admonition can be found in the attitude of St. Bernard and St. Catherine of Siena towards the Papacy.

therefore, acting on the assumption that it was the body divinely commissioned to teach and immune from failure, proceeded to settle and define the doctrines concerned with justification and faith, the real Presence and the Mass, all of which had been impugned by the Reformers. With these dogmatic decisions and many strict decrees on discipline and organisation, Catholicism, as Ranke said, "with new youth and strength again faced the Protestant World." In the Council a group of priests called Jesuits had been much in evidence, and these new recruits were to be very conspicuous in the new phase of the Church. Their founder was Ignatius of Loyola, a remarkable man, in every respect almost the very antithesis of Luther. A soldier of Spain and comparatively unlearned, he nevertheless sized up the situation and founded a religious order whose characteristics were to be obedience, learning, and cosmopolitanism. Freed from the duties of choir and monastery they could be moved swiftly from one place to another. Their principal virtue was obedience, and their chief object the restoration of good order in the interior life as well as in society. The word "order," so frequently on their lips, was borrowed from the *Spiritual Exercises* of their founder, a book destined to have a far-reaching influence, because it shortly and scientifically embodied the principles of self-control and interior sanctity.

This Jesuit ideal fitted in with the policy of the Catholic Church inaugurated at the Council of Trent. That policy may be called one of interior rejuvenation, and was promoted by strictness of external discipline, centralisation of government, and a more frequent use of the sacraments. A first impression of Catholicism to-day might lead one to think that the Church was unnecessarily cautious, that the system was too bureaucratic, and that liberty was too curtailed. But this is to forget the lesson of the Reformation. Catholicism

has a long memory, and there is prominently before it still the fact that a failure in control and over-indulgence in naturalism lost to Christendom its sacred unity. Better to appear harsh and over-careful than risk a second such disaster. Besides, the first duty was to heal its own wounds and restore its interior life, and freedom to pursue science and art, most laudable in themselves, must come second to the one necessary thing, holiness in Christ.

The fruits of this policy soon began to manifest themselves in a new zeal, a revived intellectual ability, and a galaxy of saints. The change of scene is remarkable and dramatic. The libertine Pope, Alexander VI., had died in 1503. Before the century was out, a saint, Pius V., reigned in his place. The Borgia family, by the scandal of their ways, had done more than anyone to bring disrepute on the Church, yet a Francis of that family, Duke of Gandia, resigned his possessions, became a Jesuit, and was later canonised. Charles Borromeo, a cardinal, lived like the poor man of Assisi and became the patron saint of Milan, and the dissolute Italian princes gazed in astonishment at one of their own order, Aloysius Gonzaga, setting a pattern of purity and self-abnegation. These are but a few, for it is wearisome to recite names. But all are familiar with Philip Neri, the saint dear to Newman and the Oratory, Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa the reformer of the Carmelites, and the great missionaries, Francis Xavier, Peter Canisius, and Edmund Campion.

For the rest, the history of Catholicism lacks, for the reasons mentioned, striking incidents. In Catholic countries theology regained its prestige, and the early sixteenth century may be called the silver age of theological development. Great names appear—Bellarmine who set the wise fool James I. itching to win a point from him in argument, and Suarez, the Jesuit philosopher and theologian, who furnished the material for many of the theories of democracy later

presented to the world, and many another. Politically, the Catholic cause found many champions, but the story of the long struggles in Germany and Austria and of the Huguenots and Catholic party in France belongs to secular and not Catholic history. In England, again, the political relations of that country and Spain confuse the issues. The harshness of Mary Tudor and the unpopularity of her consort, the Spanish Philip II., did much to avert sympathy from the Catholic interest, and, though secular priests and Jesuits worked hard under Elizabeth to restore the ancient faith, persecution contributed, with many other causes, to render their efforts abortive. Catholicism lingered on only in small areas and country-houses, and did not become an element in the national life until the days of Catholic emancipation and the Oxford Movement.

Elsewhere, the life of Catholicism flowed on for the most part away from the leading tendencies in modern Europe. The Papacy, of course, continued to play a part as a temporal power, and there are a number of episodes which enliven the quiet record of Catholic life, such as the famous dispute on grace between Dominicans and Jesuits, and the rise and fall of Quietism and Jansenism. Piety at the court of King Louis XIV. makes an odd, if not a merry, tale, and there is petty drama at least in the controversies between Bossuet, the preacher, and that fine soul, Fénelon, and between Pascal and the Jesuits. But for a true estimate of what was really happening one must go behind such scenes and consult the lives of St. Teresa and her Carmelites, or watch a Vincent of Paul working among convicts and galley-slaves, building hospitals for the sick and old and neglected, and sending his disciples and Sisters of Charity to teach and comfort the poor.

To make the narrative complete, however, the doings of Catholic missionaries in the newly discovered

worlds must be mentioned. There Catholicism, which had met a check in Europe, had virgin soil on which to work, and the record of their achievements makes one of the most heroic, as well as picturesque, pages in the history of mankind. Francis Xavier, one of the first Jesuits, heads the list of names, and his life reads like that of a legendary hero. Landing at Goa in 1542 he swept through the Indies, preaching, baptizing, wonder-working, now at Cape Comorin and Travancore, then on to Malacca and Cochin, and over to Japan. In 1552 he lay dying at Sancian, a little island looking upon China, the land of his desires. He left behind an almost fabulous number of converts, and that the foundations were not ephemeral is proved by an interesting discovery. In the nineteenth century a new band of missionaries reached Japan, and found there a body of Christians who, without teaching or sacraments, had remained faithful to his memory for two centuries and more. After his death intrepid priests and catechists carried on his work in India and Japan, and both countries were watered with the blood of martyrs horribly done to death. The stories of these mission-fields are full of picturesque details and vignettes, of Robert de Nobili sitting motionless through his daily fast, a Brahmin of Brahmins in habit and learning, but in soul an ardent missionary, of Ricci at the Palace of Pekin in 1601, a kind of Joseph in Egypt, by right of his knowledge in mathematics and the physical sciences. But even these two are eclipsed by the lay-brother, Benedict Goes, who discovered alone the great route from India to China through Tartary, leaving the Great Mogul to appear after five years in China and die in the arms of a fellow-religious. These and many other incidents it is pleasant to linger over, but I must leave the tale of the Franciscans in the Far West, of St. Peter Claver, the friend of the Cartagenian negro slaves, of Jogues and de Bréboeuf, the pioneers of North America, to

recall the extraordinary experiment in Paraguay, made familiar to English readers in Cunningham Graham's *A Vanished Arcadia*. There the ideal Christian Commonwealth, which had become impracticable in Europe, was realised by the Jesuits in the Reductions, and the citizens were simple Indians organised into a kind of model theocratic state!

This work of foreign missions was sadly checked by the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773, an act due to pressure brought upon Pope Clement XIV. by Pombal and several of the Catholic princes of Europe. The event may well be called a tocsin ringing out the epoch of an armed peace, and calling Catholicism to arms. Within a few years the citizens of Paris were storming the Bastille and terrorising priest and noble alike. From the dragon's teeth, sown by Hobbes and Rousseau and the Encyclopædists of the eighteenth century, there sprang the Revolution and the military dictatorship of Napoleon. The nineteenth century began with war, and it continued to witness throughout its period a struggle of contending principles and ideals. "The present generation," wrote de Maistre, "is the witness of one of the greatest spectacles that has ever confronted human sight; it is the battle between Christianity and philosophism. The lists are open; the two foes are engaged, and the world looks on."

To explain this we must review shortly the whole post-Renaissance period. Medieval Society, as noted above, was permeated with religious principles. That is not the case after the rupture of the Reformation. A divorce was set up between secular affairs and religion, and human society started on principles and ideals which may be called secular, and the momentum of these ideals carried it willy-nilly to the French Revolution and the positions taken up in the nineteenth century. Not that this movement was necessarily conscious of its destination or anti-religious. Religion,

Protestant and Catholic, at times was welcome and vigorous. Many, for instance, of the greatest leaders, scientists and artists, were religious, in conviction, or specifically Catholic, Descartes, Malebranche, Copernicus, Ampère, Pasteur, Beethoven, to mention but a few, but their faith had little to do with the *Zeitgeist*, of which they are the honour. When, then, the principles inherent in what is called Modern Europe worked themselves out to a clear issue in the nineteenth century, they were found to be not merely unreligious, but anti-religious. The world was the arena of two contending ideals, the one typified in an extreme form by Catholicism, with its appeal to the supernatural; and the other, what has been described as naturalism or absolute reliance on human nature. The reader should not be deceived by the varieties of names and movements in the nineteenth century; there are excursions and alarums, actions and reactions; now Liberalism is the vogue, now Socialism; there are sporadic or concerted cries of anti-clericalism, and conflicts of science with religion in Victorian days, but all these are so many batteries charged from one coil, the coil of naturalism. Throughout the century there is an ever-recurring hope of a perfect Society and a perfect world, the fruit of man's own labour. At first great expectations attended the coming of social liberty and equality, and Romanticism decorated the corpse of such hopes with candle-light; then Liberalism became an affair of State, and under the auspices of German philosophy lost itself in the absolutist State which could do no wrong, and used its citizens as cannon fodder. In France the high estate of free and equal men became the abstract "religion of humanity," in which, as Comte observed, by a complete volte face, "the individual is only an abstraction." Still more strange is the fate of the free individual in the social philosophy of Karl Marx, which extinguished personal ambition and substituted for freedom the iron laws of

wages. There was something evidently wrong here, and thinkers grew wary of ready-made solutions. Hegel had represented the thought of his generation in his immense prose *Divine Comedy*, in which all was worked out dialectically, and man had found his station as a divine moment in the progressive backward and forward movement of the Absolute. Now, it was felt that man was better depicted as an unfinished product, evolving with Nature to a higher but unknown condition. Science contributed to this conception. The rapid successes in the control of Nature and in physics, and the discoveries of Darwin and Wallace gave birth to what Huxley called the Religion of Science—and led later to a philosophy of Pragmatism partly American in origin, which can be summed up in the phrase: “Desire begets truth.”

This rapid sketch of the chief movements of the nineteenth century will, I hope, make it clear that there was one directive philosophy of life behind the kaleidoscopic changes. Undoubtedly, the philosophy did not prove itself true by any final success; in fact, it handed to the present generation a list of problems—the relation of State with State, and State with individual, of liberty with license, of morality with economic tendencies, and some would see the judgment on its value in the catastrophe of 1914. On the other hand, it is still a live philosophy, and there are many to-day who cry “hands off” to religion and are convinced believers in its principles. Indeed, as long as there are persons who believe that the ideal life can be attained without God, or with God only as a looker-on, or sleeping partner, various new attempts will be made to bring about universal happiness and contentment. But this expectation in the eyes of Catholicism is too like that of the Jews in the presence of Jesus Christ, with their ambition for an earthly kingdom, and, in fact, it cannot be reconciled with the Catholic theory of life.

Over against these tendencies stood the Catholic Church, willing to help, but rebuffed, and only too aware that the ideas would have to run their course before its convictions could be listened to or saved from misinterpretation. For a while, indeed, after 1815 a reaction against anti-clericalism set in, and the restored monarchy in France showed itself benevolently inclined to the Church. Thinking it a favourable moment for an alliance between Liberalism and Catholicism, some of the more ardent spirits of the time—Lamennais, Lacordaire and Montalembert—proposed this in their paper *L'Avenir*. But they were too close to Liberalism to recognise the fundamentally anti-religious character permeating it, and Rome was slow to respond to their policy. The result proved the wisdom of the Church, for the movement ended in nothing, and Lamennais fell away. Pius IX., who had started his pontificate favourably inclined to some of the ideas contained in the movement, learnt by bitter experience its real nature in 1848, and, thereafter, set himself to make clear what was true and false in the current conceptions of liberty, and in his famous Syllabus he denounced that Liberalism which rested on an over-weaning conception of human nature and claimed the right to supersede or criticise the authority and revelation of God.

The years which succeeded the revolutions and anti-clericalism of 1848 brought a lull in hostilities, because Napoleon III. kept in check for a while the scheme of Cavour and Garibaldi. But with the collapse of the French Empire, the way to Rome lay open, and in 1870 the Pope was driven out of his city to become a "prisoner in the Vatican." Ever since that date the Papacy has refused to recognise the new rulers in Italy. The reason for this is that it regards the usurpation of its kingdom as an unjustifiable act, and as it had no part in the Law of Guarantees, it has never ceased to protest against the conditions. This action of the

Papacy has excited much comment, but it must be remembered that the protest is no formality. There is a principle at stake, and it is this—that the head of an international society such as the Catholic Church must possess some temporal power; otherwise he is always subject to interference and pressure, and is at the mercy of the State in which he dwells.

Meantime, one result has been to increase the loyalty and devotion of Catholics all over the world to the Holy See. That loyalty, however, had other causes as well. As the conflict of ideals became increasingly manifest, the Church tended more and more to mobilise its forces. Prayer was fostered; new religious congregations sprang up; the Curé d'Ars and many another gave a living illustration of the ideal on which Catholicism had set its heart. Learning was encouraged, and the Catholic University at Louvain and the Gregorian in Rome conspired to develop the old by putting it into more accurate relation with the new. In Paris the Institut Catholique was started by Mgr. D'Hulst with a distinguished staff of professors, and it is no mere coincidence that Newman was received into the Church with the pages of the *Essay on Development* not yet dry. The Church itself challenged the world with its repudiation of the so-called Liberalism, and, like a medieval crusader, invoked the help of the Mother of God by defining the dogma of her Immaculate Conception—that is, her freedom from all stain of original sin. In 1870 a vast concourse of bishops met at the Vatican Council and voted for the papal prerogative of Infallibility.

The immediate result was to draw down on the Church a torrent of criticism, partly owing to the confusion of the word "infallibility" with sinlessness, partly because of the emphasis laid on Catholic authority. An intensive campaign against Catholic interests started in several countries. In Germany, Bismarck persecuted Catholics by oppressive legisla-

tion in what is known as the Kulturkampf, but the final result was only to create a strong Catholic Centre Party. In France, the Republic, after 1870, showed itself bitterly hostile, so much so that Catholics tended to identify their religion with the Royalist Party, and had to be rebuked by Leo XIII. in a significant document, in which he reasserted the compatibility of Catholicism with any legitimate form of government—monarchical or democratic. The same mistake has been made recently by French Catholics in their support of the *Action Française*, while half a generation ago the corresponding mistake was made by the Sillonist movement, equally condemned for appearing to teach that to be a good Catholic you must be republican. Meanwhile, the Republic had been trying to secularise the State by suppressing Catholic schools, expelling religious, appropriating ecclesiastical property, and severing diplomatic relations with the Holy See. The campaign ended only in 1914, with the return of the exiled religious to defend the soil of France and the prestige gained by them and many of the French Catholic generals. In Italy, after 1870, the situation was even more desperate with Socialists and Freemasons in power, and, though the permission granted by the Holy See to Catholics to partake in politics produced a popular Catholic Party, the state of affairs remained unchanged till the coming of Fascism, with its recognition of Catholic principles and its readiness to support the Catholic religion.

From this review of the facts it might be gathered that the Church suffered nothing but hatred and loss during the nineteenth century. The impression would be wrong. The number of Catholics grew enormously in the north of Europe and in the United States, and the century is remarkable in Catholic history for the number of notable scientists, writers, and artists who died in its Faith. Other religious bodies, too, began to exchange courtesies, for the growing menace of

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secularism frightened their leaders and led to the hope of a reunited Christendom. To Catholics, for instance, in England, after the Emancipation Bill, came, as Newman said, a Second Spring, and with the restoration of the hierarchy, and the strengthening of their ranks by the converts of the Oxford Movement, they grew rapidly and began to take their proper part in the affairs of their country.

The truth, however, so dramatically stated in de Maistre's dictum, of the war between two ideals, stands out vividly in the history of this century. The secular ideal, with its reliance on human progress, on liberty, and science, and economics, has been already described; and it received a rude shock in the events of the Great War. The present generation is sceptical of the hopes once entertained, and is looking round for new principles wherewith to re-establish peace and reform civilisation. On its part, Catholicism had been making its doctrines on the nature of man and society more and more precise during these conflicts. From apostolic times it had been a society with definite ends and discipline. One of these ends had been the regeneration of society, but it had never had such need to make explicit this mission. Against the individualism of the Protestant it had protested that man can be a full individual only within a society, and a religious being only within a religious body. It now went further, and said that no society can be secure without the principles of the Gospel, and that human prosperity and peace are given permanently only when society is Christian and Catholic. Long before the crash came, that great Pontiff, Leo XIII., issued encyclical after encyclical delineating the right relations that should exist between State and State, class and class, analysed the true meaning and extent of human liberty, and warned the nations that "the life which Christ dispenses must penetrate all the members and all the parts of the body politic; law, institutions,

schools, families, houses of the rich, workshops of the workers." "Let no one deceive himself; to a great extent civilisation depends on that." Pius X. showed himself of a similar mind when he adopted as the motto of his pontificate, "The restoration of all things in Christ," and in a letter to the bishops of France, in 1910, declared that "to work for the reform of civilisation is a religious work of the first importance; for there is no true civilisation without a moral civilisation, and there is no true moral civilisation without the true religion."

Itself autocratic in constitution because divinely assisted, Catholicism admits any form of government—aristocratic or democratic—so long as that government promotes the true end of the State. But democracy does not mean the right of each and every one to give or withhold loyalty and obedience as they like. Obedience to a rightly constituted authority is a duty as well as a virtue. On the other hand, that authority is bound to provide for the welfare of its citizens, and see that true freedom and opportunities of livelihood are provided. There is not necessarily any particular Catholic policy or social programme; State may differ from State and constitution from constitution according to circumstances, national temperament, and degree of development. But an oligarchy would behave wrongly which exploited labour in favour of a few capitalists, and a socialistic State is wrong because it interferes with the liberty and property of the individual, and may put the sacred rights of the family in the second place. A secularist State, too, is anti-social and wrong because it neglects the use of Christian morality and ideals which are essential for the well-being of the members. Here it is that Catholicism and the spirit of the nineteenth century were fundamentally opposed. Catholicism maintains that you must first seek the Kingdom of God and all things will be added to you. Liberalism holds that the

Kingdom of God is an idle dream, interfering with the kingdom to be built on earth, and that this earthly kingdom can be built by human ingenuity left to itself. Catholicism holds, secondly, that freedom is a priceless possession but must be guarded and disciplined, regards man as potentially noble but actually often infirm, and will have it that humility and self-sacrifice are the royal means of self-perfection. Liberalism believes that freedom is an end in itself, and interference with it, obscurantist, and that human reason is the measure of truth. The two theories are, as can be seen, antithetical. The one stakes all on human nature, and looks to a perfect society to be attained in this world. The other neither despairs nor magnifies human nature. Its diagnosis of man is that he suffers from a home-sickness for the mire, as well as a wistful longing for an imperishable home. The sage, says Plato, is always, according to the measure of his abilities, clinging in recollection to those things in which God abides, and in beholding which He is what He is. The same thought is taken up by St. Paul and St. Augustine. The abiding rest and sole contentment are to be found in the life of God, in the Heavenly City, towards which men must ever strain. But the Kingdom of Heaven is also present on earth in the Catholic Church, where Christ—the Way, the Truth, and the Life—dwells, and in human society in so far as it is permeated with the spirit of Christ and warmed by supernatural charity.

The Catholic Church during the nineteenth century had been forced to watch human society following, as it thought, will o' the wisps, and courting disaster. As its warnings went unheeded, it proceeded to teach by example. Its manifestos were clear and antagonistic; it ruthlessly expelled the Liberal and the Modernist from its midst, proclaimed the principle of authority, and, choosing St. Paul's language, likened itself to a social organism, whose principles of

life were unity and holiness. One check there was. A small number of its followers called Modernists, impatient with the waiting policy of the Pope, and desirous to join hands with Liberalism, in scholarship, political theory and philosophy, did their best to spoil all at the last moment. They were surprised at the severity with which their views were treated. They did not realise that their action was unconscious treachery, and that their tenets, including a distinction between value and reason, religious experience and historical theology, were incompatible with the belief of Catholicism. The Church regarded the tendency of the time, whether in religion or philosophy, towards Pragmatism—that is, the waiving of reason's authority in favour of experience or working hypotheses, as a form of scepticism false in itself and profoundly un-Christian. The later history of its leaders, Tyrrell and Loisy, bore out, at any rate, the second clause of this verdict. Having survived successfully this trial, the Church had shortly afterwards to make a decision on another difficult issue. When the Great War broke out there were Catholics on both sides, and both felt their cause to be righteous. In a Christian society, the Papacy would undoubtedly have intervened, but it was judged impracticable when each of the combatants in the past had repudiated any interference by Popes in national and international concerns. The nations had to suffer the nemesis of rejecting any international tribunal or spiritual control. The saintly Pius X. died in the first month, broken-hearted at the sight of Europe in conflagration, and his successor, Benedict XV., was forced to remain neutral, implore the return of Christian principles and peace, and send out only tentative peace terms, astounding the opportunist Chancelleries of Europe, not only by possessing perfectly clear principles, but by unflinchingly adhering to them. After the Armistice, and at the Treaty of Versailles, a new Europe and a new world, bound

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together in a league of friendship, were put forward as the ideal to be aimed at. But it would seem that the old leaven still works, though reform and reconstruction, on principles different from those that had prevailed before, were recognised as essential. Men were conscious of a new humility, and showed it by turning to that Catholicism which they had ignored for 300 years, and asking to see its remedy. The moment which the Church had waited for so long seemed to have come, and the first response of Pius XI. was to institute a new feast of Christ the King, and inaugurate the social reign of Christ with the prayer : " Almighty and everlasting God, who hast willed to restore all things in Thy beloved Son as King of all things, mercifully grant that all the families of the nations, sundered by the wounds of sin, may be made subject to Thy loving rule."

In these words is contained the essence of Catholicism, for they describe that belief in a supernatural social union with Christ the Head, or King, which at the same time hallows and safeguards the natural instincts of humanity.

## CONCLUSION

THE Catholicism which has been described in these pages has been the object of love of countless thousands, but they have clung to it not merely for affection but because it was believed to be true. Now truth may seem to many scarcely the right word to associate with the Catholic Faith, since it is a very common belief that Catholics surrender their reason and that the dogmas they assent to are crude and antiquated and at variance with the conclusions of modern science and philosophy. And yet, to any reflecting man, it must sound quite incredible that over three hundred millions of people should be content to abide in bondage to an obviously effete system. Nor let it be said that its members are made up of the illiterate and silly folk who would believe anything. It is true that the Catholic Church is the Church of the poor, but then its Founder was also the poor man's friend, and it numbers also among its adherents many of the aristocracy in learning and social position and culture. Yet so common is this misconception that the attitude of the Church towards reason and modern science must be made clear.

First, then, as to reason. The supernatural, which is the breath of life to its organic structure, is not superstition nor fancy nor vague ideal. If the nature of man is not the most perfect conceivable, and if God be infinite love as well as infinite power, it is possible that man might be admitted into a closer union of love, by the grace of God, than he could aspire to by his own powers. The question, therefore, resolves into the more precise one of whether there is any declared covenant between God and man to be found in history. There is the record of such an event

in the literature of the Jews, a preliminary covenant with the promise of something better to come. In the Gospels, moreover, there is the claim that the promise is fulfilled, and a new order is instituted. Is this narrative fiction or true? It is here that reason must be applied ruthlessly, for we are no longer dealing with possibilities but with definite assertions. Historical evidence is, therefore, now the guide, and the conclusion at which, so Catholicism asserts, the unbiased critic is bound to arrive, is that the history of the Jews presents something supernormal and that the fulfilment in one person, in His actions and teaching, of symbols and prophecies occurring hundreds of years previously cannot be regarded as anything but miraculous. Add to this that the characteristics, behaviour, doctrine, and deeds of this person set Him in the highest place among historical figures, that all He says and does is of a piece, that the documents, by all tests, are trustworthy and authentic, and His claims have to be listened to at least with reverence. This reverence will, it is argued, on further study, pass into a conviction that what He claims to be, He must be, and that as He claimed to be God, He must be God, the response or word from on high expected vainly by so many of the best minds and spirits of the ancient world. If God, then His word is true, and the next step is to ask what His message was. And as the critic turns over the texts and links the meaning of His life and death with His words, there rises up before him the promise and the picture of this same Christ continuing His life-saving work upon earth through a body commissioned in His name to preach His truth and offer the means of union with Himself. Reason now has turned by grace to faith, and the handiwork of Christ is seen in that teaching body which continues down the ages, ever the same, speaking with His voice and with His authority the words of life. And, within that body, those who swear to His

word claim that their position is rational, even though they accept the doctrines of the Church no longer critically by reason, but by faith—that is, on the authority of God Himself.

Such is the first reason why Catholicism prides itself on being rational. But there is a second. Although the doctrines which it teaches are accepted as revelation on authority, it, nevertheless, is confident that they can never be shown to be irrational, or outworn by human progress in science or philosophy. As this relation between religion or theology and science is the burning question of the day, and has led to a very unfavourable estimate of Catholicism, a short explanation of the attitude of the Church must be given. The Catholic Church is a teaching body and it teaches a definite number of doctrines, which it imposes on its adherents with divine authority. These doctrines, as worked upon by theologians and defined by the Church, may be called Catholic theology. Now it is argued that these doctrines are formulated on a dead philosophy, that there is evolution in theology as well as in science, and that many, if not all, the chief doctrines have been impaired, if not destroyed, by scientific discovery. Catholicism might retort that it alone has constantly held up the mirror in which man can see his own image, and so saved him in his moments of folly and weakness when he imagined himself a demi-god, or like to the brutes of the forest. As to a dead philosophy, it is true that Catholicism has definite beliefs and formularies, and that it has a preference for the terminology invented by Aristotle and perfected by Aquinas. But it is not tied to any particular system of thought, because it speaks with the common language of all mankind, and holds that a human being, if he be rational at all, can make himself intelligible and say what is true. Just as a historian, who writes of the Napoleonic Wars or the struggle of Rome and Carthage, describes the lives

and thoughts of men and women, and all who read can follow and understand, so Catholicism when it speaks of the manhood of Christ, of suffering, of free will, of matter and spirit and soul, of nature and personality, uses terms which every man-in-the-street uses with some knowledge. Its theology does not pervert these meanings, but clarifies them, making distinct what is indistinct. Thus, as was said in a former chapter, the theologians looking on Christ were certain that He was a man with mind and body and also God, and then proceeded to safeguard what they knew by means of formularies which rendered the facts sure and precise.

There is, if you will, an assumption here, but it is really an undeniable truth. Only the prejudiced philosopher will deny that there are certain permanent and unchanging truths. The books written by Athenians or ancient Romans become an unintelligible gibbering unless we admit that they meant by love and anger, thought and action, sadness and hope much the same as we mean by these words; no step can be taken in thought unless the word "truth" has some significance; no light, whatsoever, can be given by science unless the value of science is presupposed and the meaning of terms, such as relation, substance, and cause in some sort, are accepted. The philosophy, therefore, of Catholicism is not necessarily antiquated, even were it true (which it is not) that the system had no present vogue; its vocabulary is still imbedded in the language of the average man and used by the jurist, the literary critic, and the historian.

Moreover, it will be found that its condemnations of philosophic systems have, time and time again, been merited by the onesidedness of the views put forward. Philosophy has oscillated between an extravagant admiration for reason and undue depreciation of it, between a unity which resolves matter into mind or a reduction of mind to matter. All such extremes

"make a solitude and call it peace," and fail to support the fundamental facts and values of life. It is these facts and values which Catholicism cherishes, the real existence of the earth and bodies as well as souls, personality, free will, and immortality. And, as right views about such facts are essential to civilisation, instead of being regarded as the enemy of progress it deserves to be honoured as the guardian of man's best interests and well-being.

Catholicism, therefore, is not an antagonist of philosophy. But, when we turn to science, there a conflict is always being announced. Sad to tell, however, rarely is it clear what is opposed to what. If, indeed, by science were meant a philosophy of life which excluded the possibility of the supernatural, or any of those fundamental values mentioned above, then, indeed, Catholicism would be admittedly its foe, but this view of science, if popular, is, nevertheless, quite false. Again, if a Catholic were bound down to a literal interpretation of every portion of the Bible and were what is now called a fundamentalist, science would be an insuperable stumbling block; but, whatever other Christian sects hold, the Catholic is not so tied, because he relies on a teaching Church for his interpretation of the Scriptures. Hence, before war can be declared, the issues must be made clear. First, a distinction must be drawn between science and a scientific philosophy. Each science deals with a detached portion of the real world; it endeavours to find order there, and tests its hypotheses by experiment and observation of facts. Now facts are stubborn things and Catholicism never takes exception to them; hypotheses, on the other hand, are of varying value. They are seldom, if ever, final, even within the boundaries of the special study in which they have been invoked, and they decrease in likelihood according as they grow more general, and so are made to cover other sciences, and pass even into a philosophy. Hence, Catholicism

rarely concerns itself with a hypothesis which is confined to a particular field of science; but, like a watchdog, it grows restless when the particular is stretched to the universal, when scientists or their camp followers succumb to the temptations to treat the fundamental truths of philosophy, life, and religion, such as mind and soul and God, in terms of this or that particular hypothesis. Here it is at one with the best philosophy in saying that mind, for instance, or the validity of moral and religious conceptions is independent of the science of their conditions, growth, and physiological factors. Still further removed from the domain of science are doctrines of a supernatural origin and character. They stand or fall on quite different grounds, just as the stone-mason, the architect, the historian, and the Christian are each free to regard the Cathedral of Rheims from their own independent point of view.

To make this clear the example of Evolution will help. As a strict scientific hypothesis, Evolution belongs to that department of science called biology, and the modern understanding of it is derived from Darwin. But the hypothesis has been generalised and is used in a vaguer sense to bring order into our conception of inanimate nature. Finally, it has been applied to the history of civilisation, of thought and theology, and certain writers speak even of "cosmic evolution." The latter is nonsense, because variation can only occur when there is some stable environment or background, so that evolution here means nothing but change or chaos. As to the evolution of thought and theology, Catholicism distinguishes between a development in thought through error, as has happened in philosophy, and a development of truth by further determination and deduction. It rejects the evolutionary hypothesis when it is so extended as to reduce mind and morality to mere phases of matter, and as regards the strictly biological theory its attitude is as follows.

According to the Catholic Faith, the Bible story

of Adam and Eve relates the fact that mankind fell from grace—that is, God intended Adam and Eve to share in a supernatural union with Himself. They rejected the gift, and their sin left mankind deprived of this special union until it was restored by the redeeming act of Christ. Now it is to be observed that Catholicism has never declared that all the details in the setting of the story in Genesis are historical, and, secondly, that the dogma of the Church is concerned with a supernatural fact which never can be verified or denied by anthropological research. Even as a moral failing, the transgression lies outside biology or any particular science, still more so when it is set down as a sin, and a sin which meant the loss of the supernatural. To take a parallel case: biology will never have anything to say about the soul of Christ and the extent to which it affected His bodily suffering on Calvary. Even the secular historian can describe the scene of the Passion of Christ quite truly and yet never touch the question of the supernatural contained in its redemptive act. The Roman soldiers there saw a man suffering; the Christian sees God and the mystery of his salvation.

And so with all the supernatural doctrines of the Catholic Faith, they remain lifted above the reach of scientific demonstration or criticism. The intrinsic effect of Baptism, the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the direct effect of Adam's sin cannot be measured or perceived or tested by the sciences, while, on the other hand, they can be shown to be true on other grounds and to be compatible with philosophy.

It may be asked, then, why is official Catholicism so concerned with the findings of philosophy and science? The answer is that a scientific hypothesis, or theory, of the universe may render the presuppositions to belief in the supernatural impossible, and some of these presuppositions are themselves part of Catholic teaching. I refer to such truths as the existence of

God, creation, and immortality. A theory, for instance, which denied the existence of free will or personality could not but affect the whole outlook on Christ and his promises, or, again, a deduction drawn from evolution that man's mind was but a product of a lower order, would exclude the possibility of there ever having been a fall from grace. So easily, in fact, does a small error grow in dimensions that the Catholic has ever to be on the look out to preserve the integral character of man's nature and check the lie at its beginning. In its long history it has seen the disastrous consequences of playing with truth, and it has learnt that much which is called up-to-date and final loses its freshness in time and withers away. Besides, all else counts very little with Catholicism compared with its sacred commission to sanctify souls and prepare them for immortal happiness. To gain this end it is prepared to sacrifice many of the accidental joys of life, if necessary, and it demands of its members that they should discipline their curiosity. Intellectual freedom can be bought at too dear a price, and just as all governments during war exercise a censorship over news, and in peace time have the duty of guarding purity of morals, so the Church tells its members sometimes to leave new theories alone, because the average man is not capable of assimilating them or sifting the wheat from the chaff. It is this vigilance over intellectual as well as moral purity which has brought down such abuse upon Catholicism, but, in reality, the policy has been proved wise in the past and is defensible on rational principles. Having, as it believes, the living truth to administer and to teach, like St. Paul, it counts all else of secondary importance.

Catholics, therefore, are quite ready to endure the scrutiny of modern science, for they are confident that they possess the truth, and it is the living truth to which they adhere with great affection. Not for them the division in modern religious tendencies between

truth and value and the recourse to that refuge from doubt called "religious experience." They worship truth, and a living truth, which sets them free and stirs their heart to gratitude and love, and the truth is enshrined in the teaching and life of the Church. When those who do not understand talk of the tyranny of officialdom or institutionalism, contrast the mind of Christ with the ways and habits of the Church, and, in the manner of Bernard Shaw in his *St Joan*, identify heresy and Protestantism with the genuine spirit of Christianity, Catholics are inclined to laugh at such a misunderstanding of themselves, and such a misreading of history. They know that if the promise of Christ to be with his followers cannot be discerned for fifteen centuries in the one unbroken succession of Christian teaching, then Christianity is no better than other human inventions and religions. They are confident, too, on other evidence, of the supernatural character of their faith, and contemplate with pride the long-stretching history of the Church, which has proved itself young when it ought to be senile in all human estimates, and wise with the wisdom of age when yet young in years; which has moved forward without faltering, and despite its apparently extravagant assumptions has never been detected as manifestly in error; which has defined the Pope to be infallible, and calmly abides the sifting of the utterances of over two hundred and fifty successors to the chair of Peter; which uses the evidence of miracle, and sends the incredulous not to some unscientific and musty story of the past but to a Lourdes "where blind men receive sight, the lame walk, deaf people hear, and the poor people have the Gospel preached to them."

For these, then, and many other reasons which, to use the hyperbole of St. John, "if they were all described in detail, the world itself could not contain the books that could be written," Catholics recognise in the Church the voice of Christ, the divine word of

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truth, and see gathered up there in a more excellent way the best hopes and beliefs of mankind, the many fragments of the best philosophers, and the gleams and glimpses half made possible by mystic and poet. For them, Christ is the one mediator between God and man; and in and through His life, continued in the Catholic Church, human beings are changed into "something rich and strange" and pass into the very likeness of God Himself in a supernatural union of love and knowledge.

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